

# An Investigation into the Recruitment and Selection of Cleaning Operatives in Grosvenor.

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This dissertation was completed in partial fulfilment for a MA in  
Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

2011

**Declaration**

I hereby declare that the information contained in this dissertation is information related to research carried out by myself for this project. All information, other than my own contribution, will be referenced accordingly and listed in a bibliography at the back of the report. This research is submitted for the assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of M. A. in Human Resource Management and was conducted in an ethical manner.

The word count of this dissertation, excluding appendices and bibliography, is a total of 20,100 words.

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### **Acknowledgements**

The researcher would like to thank a number of people who have supported her not only in completing the following dissertation but throughout the course of this though year.

The researcher would firstly like to thank her supervisor Mr Des Gargan and all the staff of the National College of Ireland who have provided her with great assistance and support throughout her time in the college.

She would also like to thank the staff of Grosvenor, especially Mary Horgan and Michele Ryan, for all the help and assistance they have provided throughout the course of this research. Their time and patience will forever be appreciated.

Finally, the researcher would like to thank her family and friends for their continued support, encouragement and patience throughout the year. She would especially like to thank her parents who were always at the other end of the phone ready to listen and advise, without them this would not have been possible.

### **Abstract**

This dissertation reviews the different aspects of the recruitment and selection process of organisations with a focus on the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives in a contract cleaning company. Recruitment and selection is an area which affects every aspect of an organisation from production to finance and is under constant analysis by researchers and human resource practitioners alike. In a time when organisations are constantly trying to secure a form of competitive advantage not only to compete with their competitors but to out run them it is essential that they recognise the contribution each individual working for them can make in achieving it. It is because of this that the recruitment and selection practices an organisation adopts need to address the individual needs of the organisation.

The following dissertation analyses the findings of available literature based on the area of recruitment and selection including the debate of informal and formal recruitment and selection practices and the different approaches available. The literary aspect of this piece of research discusses the proposed sequential stages organisations should go through in order to ensure the right candidate is chosen for the job. On the other hand, the practical side of this dissertation aims to assess how accurately this can be done after the unique requirements of the individual organisation along with other restricting factors such as time are taken into consideration.

The research approach used in the completion of this dissertation is that of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Following the completion of a literature review the researcher conducted a number of interviews and distributed a number of surveys to the

individuals involved in the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives in order to gain an insight into employees' perceptions of these practices.

### **Company Background**

Grosvenor is a contract cleaning company with branches in Ireland, the United Kingdom and America. It is a family company which was founded in 1959 by Ben McCauley Senior and his wife Rita based on Grosvenor road in Belfast from which the name derives. The company had humble beginnings where the main source of work was cleaning windows as the concept of outsourcing activities had yet to be embraced. The company soon expanded and opened their Dublin offices in 1969 while the Belfast offices remained operational until the early 1990's.

Throughout the years the company has held contracts with a number of major businesses in the Irish market including Dunnes Stores, the Bank of Ireland and the national radio and television broadcaster RTE. As a result of numerous changes within both organisations the company has not retained all of these contracts however the company is constantly securing major contracts with more recent ones including Primark, a number of Government buildings with one of their most prestigious notable clients being IKEA which won the overall best building award at the ICCA awards in 2010.

In Ireland alone Grosvenor employs approximately 2,000 employees with the vast majority of these being cleaning operatives working in every county throughout Ireland. In a sector where turnover is high among lower level staff and with a number of individuals involved in the recruitment process the organisation needs to ensure they have adequate recruitment and selection processes in place to address both anticipated and unforeseen job vacancies which may arise. As the organisations stated objective is to 'ensures that they provide the highest possible level of service and commitment to each and every client' it is crucial that they employ the right calibre and number of staff in order to meet their goals.

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## ***Chapter 1 Introduction***

### ***1.1 Motivation behind this study***

This dissertation aims to review and compare the numerous studies and research available on the subject of recruitment and selection with the practical issues organisations must deal with when undertaking such a task. As the role of the human resource manager continuously changes one of their most commonly cited tasks remains that of the recruitment and selection of staff at all levels within organisations. This is an area which has received much attention throughout the years with numerous approaches and practices recommended to organisations and human resource managers alike.

Recruitment and selection is one of the few activities carried out by every organisation in every industry, sector and region. However, although every organisation practices recruitment and selection it is only a limited few that understand the complexity and importance associated with finding the right approach to take. As many organisations look at recruitment and selection as a process they need to go through in order to fill a vacancy they fail to realise the potential repercussions that can be experienced were the wrong individual placed in the wrong job. In order to address this it is essential for the organisation to develop a suitable recruitment and selection process tailored to the needs of the organisation.

However, before this can be done it must be acknowledged that, depending on the organisation and the position available, there are numerous factors which can affect an organisations approach to recruitment and selection such as the level of staff required, the quantity of staff, the calibre and often the most influential factor is that of time; how much time the organisation has to fill the vacancy. Regardless of the recommended approaches to

recruitment and selection organisations first need to take these issues into consideration; designing their approach around their own unique requirements.

The researcher hopes that through this study they will be able to gain a coherent insight into the many approaches and factors affecting the recruitment and selection techniques organisations have available to them in today's fast paced business environment.

### ***1.2 Broad outline of the study***

The following study was compiled using a number of research approaches. The researcher first conducted a literature review in order to establish a clear understanding of the theory behind recruitment and selection along with the numerous approaches available.

The research approach adopted for this dissertation was that of mixed method research. Through the use of both surveys and interviews the researcher was able to establish a greater understanding of the varying factors which need to be considered in order to successfully design an appropriate approach to attracting and selecting potential employees.

The structure of this dissertation is broken down into a number of chapters. The next chapter, chapter two, contains the literature review which investigates the theory behind recruitment and selection along with the numerous approaches which can be taken in order to ensure the right candidate is chosen. Chapter three outlines the research aims and objectives of this dissertation along with the significance it holds and the potential outcome findings. Chapter four, research methodology, studies the numerous factors which need to be considered when conducting research. It also outlines the research approach which will be taken and the reason behind the decision. Chapter five illustrates the findings of this

research. Finally, chapter six links the findings of the practical research with that of the literature review and concludes this dissertation.

### ***1.3 Brief overview of the findings***

The literature review of this dissertation addresses the need for organisations to have a structured approach to recruitment and selection regardless of the level of staff required. It also identifies the different approaches available as well as the various factors which affect the process such as legislation. The practical research on the other hand acknowledges the other issues which need to be taken into consideration when recruiting along with the impact the organisations individual needs can have on the approach they take. Through both forms of research it is concluded that while the theoretical aspect of recruitment and selection can be clearly defined the practical implication of this cannot address the needs of every organisation uniformly. As a result of this, recruitment and selection will vary in every organisation with a number of both external and internal factors affecting it.

## ***Chapter 2 Literature Review***

The notion of what recruitment and selection is and how it should be done has changed dramatically over the past number of years. Having once been considered a matter of filling positions as quickly as possible, numerous factors, both economic and organisational, have led to the realisation that the recruitment process a company implements can have serious implications on their overall performance and most importantly their bottom line. According to Froschheiser 2008 'putting the wrong person in the wrong position just to fill the vacancy can have dire consequences to your organization in terms of poor employee morale, low productivity and lost opportunities. The impact on your company's bottom line can be staggering' (p. 30). As a result of this along with the increasing demand for organisations to secure a sustainable source of competitive advantage, there is increasing pressure being placed on organisations to introduce effective recruitment practices.

## ***2.1 Human Resource Planning***

According to Turner 2010 'the success of an organisation depends on its ability to get the right people in the right place at the right time'. As all organisations exist in order to meet the clearly defined aims and objectives set out in their corporate and business strategy they need to ensure they are employing the right number and calibre of staff, something which can be addressed through effective human resource planning. The overall aim of human resource planning is to 'plan and anticipate what might happen in the various domains of the organisations' internal and external environment and to develop plans to address these events prior to their actually happening' (Mello 2011, p.202).

The tough economic climate of today has led to the increased necessity for organisations to be constantly aware of any changes either internally or externally and also



to ensure that they have the necessary competencies, knowledge and skills to deal with them. In a time when organisations seem to be facing more redundancies than recruitments it may be expected that the main focus of workforce planning nowadays is on downsizing, cut backs and making do with what they have. According to the latest statistics of the Central Statistics Office the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate grew by a staggering 9.2%. However, a recent study carried out by the CIPD found that 'organisations were engaged in human resource planning not just to 'right-size' for the current downturn but also to have the capability in place to thrive in the future and to make sure they continue to attract and develop talent to deal with a range of future scenarios' (Baron et al 2010 p.3). This may imply that while organisations are thinking more strategically when it comes to recruitment it remains an area of great significance.

Where an organisation fails to predict as accurately as possible their future human resource requirements they leave themselves at risk of being either understaffed or overstaffed both of which can negatively affect the overall performance of the organisation. According to Mello 'when an organisation has too many employees it experiences a loss of efficiency in operations because of excessive payroll costs and/or surplus production that cannot be marketed and must be inventoried' (2011 p.204). While one of the most common reasons for overstaffing in organisations is simply a failure to recognise and address the issue, some organisations choose to remain overstaffed for fear of losing their talented employees and not being able to recruit this talent when/if demand eventually increases.

On the other hand, 'having too few employees' results in lost sales revenue because the organisation is unable to satisfy the existing demand of customers' (Mello 2011, p.204). Understaffing is becoming increasingly prevalent especially in the public sector as an

employment embargo means no recruitment can take place regardless of whether a position becomes available through resignation, retirement or as a result of change. This puts increased pressure on the remaining staff leading to inefficiencies in the workplace. In a report by RTE News the INO said 'financial cutbacks resulting in the employment embargo in the health services have led to chaos in three of the midlands' regional hospitals' (October 2007). In cases where organisations are understaffed it is often observed that the individuals work becomes assessed on how much they get done as opposed to the standard to which it is completed. Barker (1960) notes that 'judgements concerning an individual's performance in an understaffed setting are more a function of whether the job got done (i.e. task accomplishment) and less a function of fine discriminations in process behaviours' (as cited in Ganster et al 1995, p.176).

There are a number of factors which human resource managers must take into consideration when attempting to accurately predict the future demands for human resources including the period of time they need to cover, along with the nature of the activities carried out by the organisation (Taylor 2008, 110). One of the main areas of differentiation in the recruitment process of human resource planning is whether it is the recruitment of lower skilled staff or more highly skilled staff.

There are two main categories which these roles have been divided into when dealing with recruitment; aggregate planning and succession planning. 'Aggregate planning anticipates needs for groups of employees in specific, usually lower level jobs and the general skills employees need to ensure sustained high performance. Succession planning on the other hand focuses on key individual management positions that the organisation

needs to make sure remain filled and the types of individuals who might provide the best fit in these critical positions' (Mello 2011, p.205).

## ***2.2 Competitive Advantage***

One area which both effective and efficient human resource planning can address is that of competitive advantage. Mateescu and Neagu 2009 once said 'it is commonly acknowledged that people are the key assets in the new world market and that all other assets are rather more commodities that can be purchased at market prices, because only the human asset has potential to learn, grow, and contribute to sustainable economic development'. As companies continuously strive to gain some form of competitive advantage in order to ensure they remain ahead of the competition and most importantly remain profitable they may find it increasingly difficult to identify a reliable source as competitors are constantly on the lookout and ready to imitate new products, services and methods of production.

According to Grant 1991 'the firm's most important resources and capabilities are those which are durable, difficult to identify and understand, imperfectly transferable, not easily replicated and in which the firm possesses clear ownership and control' (as cited in Armstrong 2009, p.480). An organisation's employees can often prove to be the strongest form of competitive advantage as they are each unique with their own thoughts ideas and approaches to work, along with varying educations, cultures and life experiences adding to the abilities and skills they can bring to the workplace. This is one of the many reasons why an organisations approach to the recruitment and selection of new employees is under increasing pressure to be flawless in identifying high potential individuals who will 'fit in' with the culture of the organisation.

### ***2.3 Assessing the need for staff***

‘Recruitment and selection are triggered by vacancies which may be the result of retirement, resignation, promotion, transfer or dismissal of an incumbent. Vacancies may also be created when additional or new work has to be undertaken or significant changes occur in technology, procedures, or circumstances’ (Sisson 1993, p.125). It is one of the many roles of the human resource manager with the assistance of other members of the organisation such as operations managers, to accurately predict how many employees the organisation will require along with the skills, competencies and knowledge these employees will need to possess in order to meet the needs of the organisation set out in both their corporate and business level strategies. According to Taylor ‘except in the most turbulent of environments, it is possible to look forward one or two years and make reasonable assumptions about what staffing requirements will be’ (2010, p.105). Although this may be true, a great deal depends on the sector/industry the company is in. Where an organisation operates in a highly volatile sector they will find it considerably more difficult to forecast their future demand for human resources compared to that of an organisation in a stable environment such as government offices.

Regardless of the economic climate it is essential to the overall success of any organisation that the right people are being employed who possess the necessary skills, knowledge and capabilities to work as effectively and efficiently as possible and also hold the potential to help improve the performance and essentially the profitability of the organisation. In order to ensure this there are a number of techniques which can be used to predict as accurately as possible an organisations future demand for human resources. These techniques fall into three basic categories; systematic techniques, managerial judgement and working back from cost. (Taylor 2008, p.110)

The systematic technique of assessing the future demand for human resources aims to predict as accurately as possible the future needs of the organisation based on the previous and current trends in employment taking into consideration any areas where they have previously experienced difficulties. This method of predicting future employment demands can subsequently be broken down further into three distinct approaches which are; time series analysis, work study and productivity trend analysis (Taylor 2008). The time series analysis approach is most commonly and appropriately used in relatively stable business environments such as public service areas. This essentially involves 'analysing employment levels over a time (a time series) and using this as a basis for forecasting manpower levels' (Bramham 1988, p.49). This method is also useful where an organisation experiences cyclical fluctuations over certain periods of time.

The 'work study analysis' approach is more appropriate where there are no past trends to analysis for instance if the organisation is introducing a completely new form of production or even if the company is a new start up and has no previous experience in the market. Where this method is used 'special studies are undertaken of individual tasks or processes carried out by the organisation in order to establish the numbers required to complete them most effectively and efficiently' (Taylor 2008, p.111). This approach to forecasting future demand is most commonly suited to operations in the manufacturing sector as tasks can be divided into specific roles on the production line. Throughout what is referred to as the development stage work study specialists analyse employees' performance along with the effectiveness and efficiency of how the tasks are being done and conclude on the best possible approach which will allow them to make predictions for the required staffing levels in the future (Taylor 2008).

The final approach that can be used under the heading of systematic techniques is productivity trend analysis which is often considered appropriate for the long term forecasting of highly skilled people in areas such as banking. 'This productivity method of forecasting manpower involves relating one factor with another, either to forecast workload and then use this to forecast manpower or to forecast manpower directly' (Bramham 1988, p.55). As this forecasting technique relies on the past relationship of production and staffing levels continuing into the future management must be able to use their judgement to identify possible future changes in both the internal and external environment and as a result determine how they will address future staffing needs (Bramham 1988).

Many organisations today rely on the subjective views of management to try and predict their future staffing needs. According to Taylor 2008 'in situations where the business environment is highly volatile and where future staffing patterns may well bear little resemblance to past experience, there is no alternative, if planning is to occur, to using informed opinion as a basis for estimates' (p.113). According to Stainer, there are a number of advantages which can be derived from this approach to predicting the future human resource requirements of the organisation including the fact that 'it is quick and requires little to no data and also intangible factors such as changes in fashion, social opinion and taste can be brought into account' (as cited in Taylor 2010, p.108).

One technique which falls under the heading of managerial judgement is the 'Delphi method'. According to Günaydin 'the objective of most Delphi applications is the reliable and creative exploration of ideas or the production of suitable information for decision making' (2000). Helmer (1977) states that 'the Delphi method represents a useful communication device used among a group of experts and therefore facilitates the

formation of a group judgement' (as cited in Günaydin). In terms of human resource planning organisations using this technique require a number of their managers to submit in writing their own predictions of the future staff required. The estimates from these predictions are then circulated back amongst the group of managers who then revise their calculations based on the findings of the report. After potentially numerous rounds of estimates and predictions a consensus is reached by management on the future staffing requirements of the organisation.

Although Stainer identified a number of advantages held by the managerial judgement approach to predicting human resource demands he also acknowledged the fact that it was not without its draw backs. Stainer believes that 'the complexity of the process and the number of factors at work are often too great for a single brain or group of brains to cope with' (as cited in Taylor 2010, p.109). Kispal-Vitai and Wood (2009) also expressed their uncertainty as to the reliability of managerial judgement as they 'argue that this kind of approach can amount to little more than a sum of the best guesses' (as cited in Taylor 2010, p.109).

The final approach that can be used to predict future staffing demands, working back from costs, is based mainly on the financial grounding of the organisation. 'With the help of the finance department the manager should be able to work out what the organisation can afford to spend if profit and market targets are to be met. This gives a good indication of manpower requirements because the manager then has to plan for a workforce capable of achieving the work to be done within a cost constraint' (Bramham 1988, pp.58-59). One of the main advantages to be gained from this approach is that as managers are working from

future predictions instead of from past experiences they are not constrained by traditional practices which were potentially inefficient.

## ***2.4 Job Analysis and Design***

Once the organisation has identified the need for additional staff the next stage in the recruitment and selection process is to conduct a job analysis. Froschheiser highlights that in a recent national survey 'over 30% of CEO's said that up to half of their employees are a poor fit for their job' (2008, p.30). In order to prevent this and ensure the correct candidate will be chosen it is important that those involved in the recruitment process understand exactly what role they are recruiting for in order to ensure they select the best fit for the job. Pilbeam et al define job analysis as the 'systematic process of collecting information about the tasks, responsibilities and contexts of the job' (2006, p.146). Many researchers including McMahon & O'Carroll (1999) and Pilbeam & Corbridge (2006) have acknowledged that the functions of a job analysis go beyond that of the recruitment process but see it as 'an essential foundation for many of the processes that underpin personnel/human resource management practice in organisations including not only recruitment but also selection, performance appraisal, training and development, job evaluation and health and safety' (McMahon & O'Carroll 1999, p.117).

When compiling a job analysis the organisation is essentially undertaking a form of research as information needs to be gathered from a number of sources regarding the skills, knowledge and capabilities that are required in order to fill the vacancy. 'The job analysis can be undertaken solely or jointly by the line manager or the HR specialist depending upon the techniques being used, the expertise of the analyst and the complexity of the job' (Pilbeam et al 2006, p.147). There are also a number of ways in which the necessary



information can be gathered in order to compose an accurate job analysis including the use of 'exit interviews', observing those currently doing the job, asking supervisors, managers and colleagues for their input.

According to McMahon & O'Carroll 'ideally, job analysis should comprise the following components; job description, job specification and person specification' (1999, p.117). The job description is 'essentially a broad statement of the purpose, scope, duties and responsibilities that are attached to the job and as such is the basis for the contract of employment' (Gunnigle et al 2006, p.106). As well as gaining a clear understanding of the tasks the new job will entail a job description will also allow management to identify if there is in fact a job vacancy or is it actually a gap which resulted from other employees failing to do their job properly. There are approximately 10 elements of a job description including:

1. Job Title
2. Department
3. Location
4. Reports to
5. Purpose
6. Main Tasks
7. Liaison and Main Contacts
8. Staff Responsibilities
9. Special Features
10. Reward and Conditions

(Gunnigle et al 2006, p.106)

The next component of a job analysis is the person specification which essentially provides the organisation with a summary of the skills, knowledge and capabilities candidates will need to possess in order to do the job as effectively and efficiently as possible. While researching this component of recruitment and selection two commonly referenced authors in the area were Rodger (1952) and Munro-Fraser (1954) both of whom developed relatively similar frameworks in order to assist recruiters to identify the best candidates as accurately and fairly as possible.

Rodgers seven point plan consisted of the following components and descriptions:

1. Physical make up: health, appearance, bearing and speech
2. Attainments: education, qualifications, experience
3. General intelligence: intellectual capacity
4. Special aptitudes: mechanical, manual dexterity, facility in use of words and figures
5. Interests: intellectual, practical, constructional, physically active, social, artistic
6. Disposition: acceptability, influence over others, steadiness, dependability, self-reliance
7. Circumstances: any special demands of the job

Munro-Frasers five-fold grading system consisted of similar components:

1. Impact on others: physical make-up appearance, speech and manner
2. Acquired qualifications: education, vocational training, work experience
3. Innate abilities: quickness of comprehension and aptitude for learning
4. Motivation: individual goals, consistency and determination in following them up

5. Adjustments: emotional stability, ability to stand up to stress and ability to get on with people

(as cited in Beardwell & Holden 2001, p.236)

Although, according to the research, these frameworks are commonly referenced a number of the components seem slightly out-dated with some having potential legal implications as they refer to the physical 'make-up' and 'emotional stability' of candidates, issues which are stated as grounds for discrimination in the 1998-2008 Equality Act. As a result of this organisations need to ensure that, if following either of these frameworks, they do so in an ethical and fair manner remaining free from discrimination.

While discussing Rodgers and Munro-Frazer's frameworks organisations are reminded of the potential legal implications their recruitment processes can have were they to inadvertently discriminate against a certain group of individuals. However, where organisations develop an accurate job analysis they are increasing the chances of developing job and person specifications which are as free from bias and discrimination as possible. According to Beardwell and Holden 'preconceived or entrenched attitudes, prejudices and assumptions can lead, consciously or unconsciously, to requirements that are less job-related than aimed at meeting the assumed needs of customers, colleagues or the established culture of the organisation' (2001, p.237). Therefore through the accurate development of a job analysis organisations are helping to prevent such assumptions.

Before the recruitment process can begin it is important for the organisation to identify the individuals who will be responsible for and involved in the recruitment and selection process and at what stage. This is particularly important where there are a number

of branches throughout a region. Where this is the case district managers may be given the responsibility of predicting staffing needs along with carrying out the different stages of the recruitment and selection process.

## ***2.5 Recruitment***

The recruitment and selection of staff can be seen as a process clearly defined by a number of sequential steps each of which hold great significance in the sourcing and employing of appropriate candidates. Once the organisation has identified the need for staff and successfully conducted a job analysis they must then decide on the recruitment techniques they will use in order to attract the best candidates. In this stage alone the organisation must decide whether to recruit internally or externally along with how they will advertise the available positions and attract desirable candidates.

Through both the assessment and job analysis and design stage organisations should be able to identify whether or not an individual currently working within the organisation would be able to meet the requirements of the new position or if an individual external to the organisation would be more appropriate.

## ***2.6 Internal Recruitment***

Internal recruitment, according to Newell (2005) is a common occurrence in the private sector as organisations 'attempt to fill vacancies internally before they consider looking for people outside the organisation' (as cited in Taylor 2007, p.215). Internal recruitment can take place using many different techniques as well as for many different reasons.

Fuller and Huber (1998) have identified four distinct internal recruitment methods which can be used in an organisation. These include; promotions from within, lateral

transfers, job rotation and rehiring former employees (as cited in Taylor 2008, p.215).

Promotions from within an organisation can serve a number of purposes not only can they address the staffing needs of the company but they can also address other issues as they can be seen as a form of reward and work incentive for the employees with the potential to increase motivation, commitment and retention levels within the organisation. Bramham acknowledges this as he states that 'assuming promotion remains a motivator for employees, the manager will expect to improve or maintain retention and commitment by a properly managed promotion policy' (1988, p.71). Promotion is often the common choice where more senior positions are available within the company as Chan states that 'external recruits account for only about 15% to 20% of all appointments to top management positions' (2006 p.169).

The other approaches to internal recruitment such as lateral transfers and job rotations have also proven to be beneficial in the past as they provide employees with the opportunity to gain a more holistic understanding of the different tasks carried out in the different areas of the organisation. This can also prove to be beneficial to the organisation; where there is an unexpected absence other employees will be able to stand in as opposed to hiring in temporary workers where it is not completely necessary.

Internal approaches to recruitment are often adopted in order to maintain good relations in the organisation along with high levels of staff morale and providing a form of work incentive. According to Maureen Henson 'internal recruitment provides a higher level of employee satisfaction, so certainly it can be a retention driver' (as cited in Gensing-Pophal, 2006). Although these factors support firms decisions to use internal recruitment organisations run the risk of filling a vacancy with a substandard employee. According to

Chan 'it increases the chance of inferior internal contestants being promoted to senior positions' (2006 p.169). It is important for the organisation to understand that they are severely limiting the talent pool from which to recruit as there will only be a handful of potentially appropriate candidates working within the organisation compared to the numbers that may apply were they to recruit externally.

One of the more commonly cited advantages of internal recruitment is the considerable cost effectiveness of such practices. 'Vacancies can be advertised at no cost at all using staff noticeboards, newsletters or intranet systems' (Taylor 2008 p.216). Through the implementation of this recruitment method organisations can experience cost savings in a number of areas including advertising, induction and training. According to Bayo-Moriones et al 'filling the vacancy with someone who already works in the organization realizes savings in the training costs associated with company-specific functions' (2006 p.453). As advertisements for the new position can be done using notice boards, word-of-mouth, the company intranet and newsletters the organisation stands to save money from the start eliminating the need to spend money on agencies, advertisements, etc. When considering this approach however organisations need to ensure they possess the right calibre of staff to fill the position as any cost savings experienced in the recruitment may be cancelled further down the line. According to an article in Business Credit (2006) 'the wrong person costs you three times his or her annual salary'. Therefore although the organisation may have saved in the recruitment stage they run the risk of incurring greater expenses in lost opportunity cost and loss of potential business and customers.

Talent management is another approach organisations have been using as a means of internal recruitment. According to Hill 2008 'talent management systems are making a

comeback as demand for quality staff intensifies and recruitment budgets come under threat'. This allows the organisation to plan effectively for future positions which may become available as they should be able to identify immediately the appropriate candidate for the job.

## ***2.7 External Recruitment***

According to Adam Hill 'not all skills can be sourced from within, and there will always be a need for external recruitment' (2008). External recruitment is used to attract a broad range of applicants into the organisation and can take place through the formal techniques of printed media advertisements, external agencies, education liaison, other media and professional contacts' (Taylor 2008, p.164). There are a number of other approaches organisations can use in order to successfully recruit the appropriate candidate which are becoming increasingly technologically orientated including the use of social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc. According to Evans (2011) 'as the talent pool becomes more diverse and more unpredictable, recruitment becomes trickier'. With the increasing availability of diverse recruitment methods organisations need to ensure they are using the most effective methods which will appeal to the desirable candidates whether it is through the traditional means of newspapers and noticeboards or the more modern techniques of online advertisements.

## ***2.8 Informal***

One commonly used approach to recruitment is the use of informal methods such as word of mouth and speculative applications. 'Informal recruitment methods are highly associated with smaller organisations and provide potential applicants with accurate and detailed information about the organisation and the job' (Henry & Temtime 2010). Where

informal recruitment occurs candidates are often chosen through references from existing employees or other individuals associated with the organisation in some way. According to Taylor 'research strongly suggests that informal recruitment methods yield a better selection of well qualified applicants than formal methods' (2008 p.234). However it can also be argued that, as with internal recruitment, informal recruitment also limits the pool of applicants the organisation will have to choose from.

Research on this area has shown that there is a correlation between informal recruitment and high retention levels in an organisation. One of the possible reasons for this is that 'candidates who are recruited by word of mouth or approach organisations themselves self-select to a greater degree than those finding out about the job from other sources' (Taylor 2008, p.234). Although organisations may see this as a desirable trait in a recruitment technique they must also be aware that through such methods they are potentially discriminating unintentionally and restricting the diversity of their workforce.

## **2.9 Formal**

According to Henry et al (2009) 'in order to maintain organisational ability and sustain competitive advantage this will depend on the ability of the organisation to attract and retain individuals with skills needed to give the organisation a competitive edge'. The use of formal recruitment techniques could be considered the better option here as, opposed to informal recruitment, the organisation can attract a wider variety of candidates giving them a considerably greater talent pool to choose from. 'Formal recruitment methods have a great impact in attracting a larger pool of applicants' (Henry 2009). There are a number of approaches organisations can take where formal recruitment is involved.



One of the many available options for organisations is the use of employment agencies and consultants. Where organisations choose to avail of the services of these third parties agencies they are essentially outsourcing a portion of the recruitment and selection process. These agencies test and screen potential candidates before recommending them for the organisation to interview. Recruitment consultants however will not only undertake much of the administration duties associated with recruitment but they will also handle the advertisement of the position.

Where this approach to recruitment is taken the organisation is saved a considerable amount of time and effort both in relation to their involvement in the recruitment process also the length of time it may take to source an appropriate candidate as agencies 'can provide applicants at short notice' (McMahon & O'Carroll 1999, p.126). Before organisations choose to adopt this approach to recruitment they must ensure that the financial costs do not outweigh the potential benefits as agencies and consultants charge approximately '8-15 per cent of the basic salary' (McMahon & O'Carroll 1999 p.127).

The more traditional and commonly used approach to recruitment is the use of local and national press such as newspapers, radio and television. The use of these advertisement tools can often prove to be very effective as one highlighted advantage of them is that they are 'exclusive and high impact, making it difficult for audiences to ignore – and they immediately research prospects who are not actively seeking a job change' (McMahon & O'Carroll 1999, p.129). The use of local media is often considered one of the best options as it will appeal to candidates seeking local employment and is relatively low in cost. However, in large urban areas such as Dublin it may prove more difficult to identify the most appropriate form of press to use.

The internet has quickly become one of the most commonly used forms of recruitment available along with the most cost effective. Organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits to be gained from this form of recruitment as networking sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook provide an effective means of advertising new positions to a wide demographic of potential candidates.

### ***2.10 Selection***

Once the organisation has decided on the appropriate means through which they will recruit potential candidates for the job their next task is to identify the most appropriate and effective method to use in order to select the right person. At this stage organisations have a wide variety of approaches to choose from, often combining a number of approaches in order to maximise their chances of identifying the best fit.

### ***2.11 The Classic Trio***

A recent survey carried out by the CIPD in association with Hays revealed that the classic trio of C.V's/application forms, interviews and references is the second most popular tool used in the process of recruitment and selection by organisations today with 63% of companies surveyed using them regularly (People Management, p. 40). The classic trio is a term which was coined by Mark Cook in 2004 in his reference to one of the most popular combinations of recruitment and selection tools used by organisations over the past number of decades despite numerous articles, publications and studies which support the belief that there is a considerable number of alternative recruitment and selection tools available which can, predict with much greater accuracy, the suitability of candidates.

## ***2.12 C.V's & Application Forms***

According to a survey carried out by the CIPD, 'application forms are used by approximately 80% of respondents' (Taylor 2008, p.258). The first component of the 'classic trio' approach to recruitment is the application form or curriculum vitae. 'This recruitment tool has become so much a part of the recruitment custom that it is wholly expected by candidates and taken for granted by most recruiters' (Roberts 2009, p. 103).

Where an organisation opts to use the curriculum vitae approach they are essentially providing candidates with the opportunity to design their own application form, highlighting what they feel is most relevant to the organisation and the job being offered. This approach 'gives applicants the freedom to sell themselves in their own way' (Taylor 2008, p. 258). According to Roberts, 'some recruiters prefer to use this method as it demonstrates the ability of the candidate to marshal their thoughts and put together a clear piece of communication' (2009, p.103) However, Taylor also argues that candidates are also given the opportunity to 'contaminate' their C.V. This occurs when 'a C.V. is particularly attractively presented or structured, leading unwary selectors, perhaps unconsciously, to favour applications from otherwise unimpressive candidates over those of their better qualified rivals' (2008, p.259).

The application form on the other hand is a document consisting of a number of questions which the applicant must answer as concisely as possible as there is usually a restriction put on the word count. Numerous authors have identified a number of issues which can arise for organisations who choose to use application forms as a recruitment tool. One of the most highlighted issues is the fact that the restrictive nature of their design can quite possibly cause excellent candidates to be overlooked. Another issue which arises with

application forms is that organisations often fail to tailor them to identify the skills, competency and knowledge required for the job.

Taylor suggests that in order to address this problem and to ensure the effectiveness of application forms as a recruitment tool 'the best solution is to design separate application forms for each vacancy advertised' (2008, p. 259). Although, in theory, this is potentially the best available option for organisations it is often much more difficult to achieve in reality. 'Depending on the size of the organisation and diversity of roles the organisation may have a single uniform application or a small number of applications for different kinds of job families' (Roberts 2009, p. 103).

### ***2.13 Interviews***

Pilbeam et al describe interviews as 'a social encounter between an applicant and a representative of an employer and personalises the recruitment and selection process' (2006, p 179). There are two forms an interview can take; they can be structured focusing on a set number of clearly defined criteria or they can be unstructured taking the form of a free ranging discussion (Roberts 2009, p. 12). One of the main issues which have been highlighted regarding unstructured interviews is the potential risk of assessing each candidate on varying criteria. As candidates may be asked different questions 'the traditional interviewer gathers information in a relatively unsystematic manner and may reach judgements about candidates on a number of different grounds' (Taylor 2008, p. 267). As a result of this it becomes increasingly difficult to assess potential candidates fairly and the perfect fit may be over looked.

Where interviews are heavily relied on as a recruitment tool, organisations need to ensure the individual conducting the interview is as unbiased as possible, as prejudice is a

major concern where this recruitment tool is concerned. According to Pilbeam et al 'interviewers have a tendency to make up their minds within the first few minutes of the interview and the remainder of the time is spent confirming these first impressions' (2006, p. 179).

Throughout the years a number of criticisms have been expressed regarding the effectiveness of the interview; however as reflected by the CIPD's survey findings, it remains one of the most popular recruitment tools used by managers from all industries and sectors. It is also a recruitment practice that potential candidates expect to be put through as part of their application process. The exact reason for the survival of this recruitment technique has not been identified however professionals, researchers and authors alike have made suggestions as to why they remain so popular regardless of the more advanced effective methods available today.

One of the main explanations put forward by the experts for the survival of this recruitment tool is that it is one of the most cost effective approaches an organisation can use in the assessment of appropriate candidates. According to Taylor one explanation 'is the relatively low cost of carrying out simple one to one interviews and the consequent perception that their efficiency outweighs their ineffectiveness as predictive techniques' (2010, p. 232).

Herriot suggests that another reason for the continued popularity of the interview is that it allows for a face to face encounter for both the candidate and the interviewer. Herriot states that the interviewer 'believes that only by these means can they discover whether the applicant is likely to fit in to the organisation – whether others will like him or her and will work well together' (1992, p.435).

In Herriot's writings he also identifies two other possible reasons for the continued popularity of interviews; mutual review and negotiations (Taylor 2008). Herriot states that 'organisations may assume that the interview offers the opportunity for applicants to ask questions to find out more about the job' (1992, p. 435). It also may help the applicant to gain a general idea of what the organisation is about; i.e. culture, values and beliefs. This may also help the applicant to decide whether or not they actually want the job.

Finally, it is believed that interviews can play an important role in the portraying the organisation as an employer of choice. According to Taylor 'there is every advantage to be gained from sending candidates away believing that they would like the job if subsequently offered it, determined to seek other positions within the organisation if other opportunities present themselves and willing to speak well of the organisation because of the efficiency, effectiveness, fairness and courtesy displayed towards them' (2008, p. 270).

### ***2.14 Reference Letters***

Throughout the past decade the use of references has become increasingly problematic for all concerned; individuals are finding it hard to obtain one from previous employers, employers are becoming increasingly unwilling to issue them and prospective employers are experiencing difficulty in gaining truthful unbiased accounts of potential employees. The validity of references as adequate recruitment tools has been put under great scrutiny especially over the last number of years as there are now legal implications attached to the concept. According to Taylor 'as a predictor of job performance the reference letter has low validity, and has often been found to say more about its author than about its subject' (2008, p. 281).

An article by Anat Arkin highlights the problems organisations can incur regardless of whether they are requesting or providing the reference. However, the writer also suggests that while dealing with references can be difficult for all concerned they can also prove very beneficial to the organisation trying to establish the suitability of candidates to the position. (Arkin 2005)

Over the last number of years the risk involved with providing a simple reference has increased significantly as employers are aware of the risk they put themselves at were they to either provide a reference portraying the candidate in a less than flattering light or base their decision not to hire an individual on a reference regarding the candidate. Therefore, with this increasing threat of 'discrimination and slander suits from former employees some will only verify dates of employment, salary, and position to prospective employers' (HR People, 2009).

In their article Arkin suggest that if an ex-employer is willing to give a more in-depth account of the individuals' performance it is becoming more common for them to do so verbally as they may be unwilling to commit anything to paper. Alastair Oatey is quoted in Arkins article as saying "in today's litigious society, people are prepared to say things on the phone that they wouldn't write down. You can allude to things on the phone in a way that you can't do on paper".

As a result of the risks associated with both providing references and basing decisions on them the validity of this recruitment tool is under constant scrutiny. However, along with the two other components of the 'classic trio' this remains one of the most popular approaches to recruitment today as can be seen from the CIPD's 2011 survey.

### ***2.15 Psychometric Testing***

One of the most talked about developments in recruitment and selection today is that of the growing focus being placed on psychometric testing as a recruitment tool.

According to Pilbeam & Corbridge 'psychometric tests are tests that can be systematically scored and administered, which are used to measure individual differences – for example in personality, aptitude, ability, attainment or intelligence' (2006 p.183).

### ***2.16 Work Simulation/Samples***

According to Ployhart 'work samples present applicants with a set of tasks or exercises that are nearly identical to those performed on the job'. This allows the assessors to judge the applicants on an area relevant to the position they are applying for. It is believed that work samples provide one of the best ways to simultaneously achieve validity and diversity (Ployhart 2006 p.880).

In tray exercises can be used where this approach to recruitment and selection is concerned. This consists of providing each candidate with a number of documents, each of which they must sort through and clearly state the action they would take to deal with each matter.

### ***2.17 Biographical Data***

This approach to selection has been available for a number of years however it is only recently that it has attracted the attention of a number of researchers in the area of recruitment and selection and is a method used by a minority of organisations. Although this approach to recruitment can take many forms essentially it 'involves using detailed information concerning an applicants' past to make deductions about his or her likely performance in the future' (Taylor 2008, p.288). This information can be gathered from



letters of application, CV's, interviews, etc. According to Pilbeam and Corbridge 'the use of bio data is predicted on two beliefs: first that prior experiences and circumstances shape distinctive behaviour patterns, and therefore abilities; and second, that accessing the experiences and circumstances of the individual enables the prediction of future behaviour and consequent job performance' (2006, p.191).

Where organisations choose to use this approach to selection they must first ensure that they have carried out an accurate job analysis as the design, development and use of a systematic bio data system is both organisation and job specific. In a recent study carried out by Harvey-Cook & Taffler they acknowledged that throughout the years a number of criticisms have emerged regarding bio data as a selection tool stating that 'the scored bio data approach has been criticized for (a) lack of stability, (b) apparently mystifying relationships between independent and dependent variables, (c) organizational-specificity, and (d) susceptibility to faking (2000 p.104).

### ***2.18 Assessment Centres***

According to Dayan et al 'the assessment centre is a diagnostic tool in which several judges examine applicants' performance in job-related simulations' (2008, p.102). Where assessment centres are the chosen selection tool a number of different methods are used to assess applicants including testing, interviews and work simulations. Assessment centres are the best example of a multi-assessment process and have the following characteristics:

1. The assessment criteria are defined in a rigorous way (usually through role analysis)
2. The assessment methods are tightly mapped against these criteria

3. More than one assessment method and more than one assessor are deployed for each criterion area
4. Candidates typically go through the assessment process in groups, with a full integration session following each assessment programme

(Rush 1999, p.182)

Throughout the years assessment centres have been praised for their accuracy and effectiveness. As they are also useful in 'extracting behaviours relating to interpersonal relationships, leadership, influencing ability, sociability, competitiveness, self-motivation, tolerance, persuasiveness, problem analysis and decisiveness' they are considered an effective selection tool for the recruitment of higher level staff such as managers (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, p.187). According to Thornton 'this method is commonly utilized for selection and promotion of higher level managerial positions, and has exhibited high validity and effectiveness in predicting managerial success according to varying criteria' (as cited in Dayan et al 2008, p.103). However, although this approach can be considered among the most effective one of the major drawbacks for organisations is both the high financial cost and time it requires. As a result of these factors it would be unadvisable for organisations to use them when recruiting lower level staff such as cleaning operatives.

### ***2.19 Evaluating the process***

The design and development of a recruitment and selection process is one that is very complicated and varies greatly in every organisation. In order to ensure the organisation has implemented an effective process which is addressing the needs of the firm as effectively and efficiently as possible it is essential that they evaluate the process in a way

which will identify any deficiencies it may have and address them accordingly. It is important that all stages of the recruitment process are evaluated from the job analysis and design to the selection methods used.

One method which can be used to assess the effectiveness of recruitment process is through the use of performance management systems. This can be done by comparing and contrasting the employees' performance with the job requirements as set out in the job description. Where the individual fails to perform to the required standards during the probationary period this is an indication that the recruitment and selection process has failed to identify the appropriate candidate for the job.

### ***2.20 Transfer of Undertakings***

Recruitment is the most commonly recognised method through which individuals are introduced into an organisation however this is not the only method through which an organisation can obtain new employees. The transfer of undertaking legislation has a significant impact on organisations where any legal transfer or merger of any undertaking, business or part of an undertaking or business from one employer to another occurs. The transfer of undertakings legislation 'sets out the obligations on business transfers that member states (i.e. governments) have to implement (Moncur 2005, p.351). According to the CIPD this 'law relating to transfers of undertakings comes from European law and is designed to safeguard employees' rights when businesses (or parts of businesses) are taken over' (CIPD, 2010).

'The regulation provides that the terms and conditions of employment of the employees working in the undertaking are transferred from the old employer to the new employer at the time the relevant transfer takes place' (Moncur 2005, p.352). The CIPD

highlight the fact that there a number of reasons for transfer of undertakings, there does not have to be a change of ownership for this legislation to apply. It can apply 'by way of a lease or license, franchise or other arrangement' (CIPD, 2010).

Novella et al states that 'the legislation, which ensures the continuity of employment relationship, can, in certain cases, be in the common interest of both the transferor and transferee (in guaranteeing the fluidity of transferring parts of businesses and reassembling companies, which would otherwise be hampered by the need to obtain the consent of the employees that have been transferred)' (2008, p. 57). In their article Novella et al identify how the transferor may benefit in that they do not have to partake in either collective or individual dismissals which would need to be justified. They also state that the benefit it holds for the transferee are that it keeps the assigned business operative (Novella et al, 2008).

### ***2.21 Equality***

According to Beardwell and Holden 'while organisations have considerable freedom of choice in the type of people they want to recruit, legislation plays a significant role in the recruitment and selection process, particularly in attempts to prevent discrimination (2001 p.230). When dealing with any aspect of human resources equality among current and even potential employees is a constant issue which must always be dealt with in an appropriate manner in accordance with the Employment Equality Act 1998 – 2008. Under this employment equality act discrimination is prohibited on nine distinct grounds:

1. Gender
2. Age

3. Race
4. Religious Beliefs
5. Marital Status
6. Member of the travelling community
7. Sexual Orientation
8. Family status
9. Disability

(CIPD Factsheet November 2010)

As legislation becomes increasingly strict around the area of equality and discrimination, which is evident from the numerous times the act has been revised, organisations need to ensure they have implemented the correct measures to ensure all current and potential staff members are being treated equally.

In relation to equality and the recruitment process it is essential that those involved in recruiting appropriate staff are aware of the regulations as governed by the Equality Act at every stage of the recruitment and selection process. A recent article published in the Irish Times highlighted this when it reported 'jobs website Loadzajobs.ie and an unnamed university foundation were forced to remove the word "young" from two job advertisements. In the case of the Loadzajobs.ie website it was held that looking for a "young, dynamic office manager" was discrimination on age grounds' (McGreevy 2011).

### ***2.22 Garda Clearance***

According to the citizens information website 'the law in Ireland makes it a criminal offence for some people who fail to notify their employers they are guilty of certain criminal offences before taking a job or performing a service' (2011). Although recruitment and selection is a constant issue for every organisation there are only a number of organisations who are legally obliged to carry out a background check on the successful candidates' criminal history. Where organisations are recruiting for a position where the chosen individual will be working with children, in a hospital or in a government building such as a court house, the company must carry out a background check on that individual through the use of Garda clearance forms. Many organisations face great difficulties where these are required as it can take up to three months for an individual to be deemed fit to work for the organisation in the position. As a result of this organisations can lose out on high potential candidates as they are unwilling to wait that long to start a job and in the meantime have found a new position in another organisation.

### ***2.23 Non-nationals***

According to Ruhs (2009) 'Ireland experienced dramatic increases in immigration flows from the mid-1990s but most markedly after the 2004 EU enlargement. Flows peaked in 2006-2007 at well over 100,000 immigrants per year'. This dramatic increase in immigrants into Ireland caused a number of changes to the Irish legislation including 'Ireland moving away from its more liberal work permit system' (Ruhs 2009). This in turn affected the recruitment and selection process used by organisations as they now had to take into consideration the implications of hiring non-national employees. Legally speaking this means more paper work as the organisation needs to ensure the individual possesses the correct legal documentation such as visas and work permits.

However this is not the only implication it can have for organisations. As the laws governing equality become more predominant in today's society organisations need to be more vigilant in ensuring they have selected their candidate as fairly as possible in order to prevent both legal repercussions and damage the company name.

### ***2.24 Training***

In organisations where there is a large number of employees involved in the recruitment process human resources need to ensure that these individuals possess relevant up-to-date knowledge on the area in order to maintain a uniform approach to this activity. This may occur where there are many branches of the organisation or employees operate on different sites/locations. Training should not only address the organisation's recruitment policy i.e. the approach they take from assessing the need for staff to selecting the right candidate but it should also incorporate any other issues such as recruiters' legal obligations under the Equality Act and the legislation around recruiting non-nationals i.e. checking and processing visas, work permits, etc.

## ***Chapter 3 Research Aims and Objectives***



### ***3.1 Research Question***

The focus of this piece of research is to investigate the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process adopted by an organisation in the contract cleaning sector of the service industry.

### ***3.2 Aims and objectives***

The researcher has taken an exploratory approach to this piece of work as the aim of this research is to establish whether or not the recruitment and selection process Grosvenor Group adopts is effective in meeting their staffing requirements. The research objectives are to:

1. Evaluate the theoretical aspect of recruitment and selection.
2. Identify the recruitment and selection approaches used by the organisation.
3. Establish the effectiveness of their approach making recommendations where appropriate

In order to successfully reach these objectives the researcher needs to outline the research questions which she must address. These questions are:

1. According to the literature what are the most effective tools available in the carrying out of recruitment and selection?
2. What is the current recruitment and selection process used by Grosvenor?
3. How is this process perceived by the individuals involved?
4. How does the available literature address the recruitment needs of Grosvenor?
5. What recruitment and selection practices could the organisation adopt in order to improve their recruitment and selection process, if any?

### ***3.3 Significance***

The purpose of this research is not only to establish whether or not the organisation has adopted recruitment and selection practices which are supported by existing literature but also to establish whether or not existing literature can be applied to the unique needs of this organisation.

The significance of this piece of research will be to improve both the organisations and the researchers' knowledge of the different approaches to recruitment and selection available to human resource practitioners regardless of the skills required or the industry or sector of the organisation. This research will also provide the organisation with numerous options available to them along with recommendations as to the most appropriate in relation to their individual situation.

### ***3.4 Process of the research***

In order to complete this piece of research the research adopted both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Due to time constraints along with geographical limitation the researcher was unable to conduct interviews or focus groups with all employees involved in recruitment and selection and as a result used questionnaires as a means of establishing an overall understanding of the recruitment and selection process used in the organisation. In order to establish a clearer view of this process the researcher used qualitative means and interviewed available staff members that are involved in the recruitment and selection process.

### ***3.5 Outcome of the research***

Through conducting this research the researcher hopes to establish an understanding of the effectiveness of the recruitment process currently being practiced in Grosvenor and identify areas where improvements can be made as a result of observations made from the literature review.

## ***Chapter 4 Research Methodology***

The aim of this piece of research is to investigate the current practices and procedures in place in relation to the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives in the organisation. When undertaking a task such as this it is important to ensure that the most appropriate research methodology has been identified and employed. However, there are a number of different factors which first need to be considered including the research philosophy, approach and data analysis that will be adopted in conjunction with the purpose of the research.

#### ***4.1 Research Philosophy***

The research philosophy undertaken by any researcher is a major component in the overall research methodology that will be used and can affect greatly the overall findings of their work. According to Saunders et al 'research philosophy is the overarching term relating to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge in relation to research' (2009, p.107). There are a number of research philosophies available all of which are valid in their own way as they relate to different aspects of research, 'which is better depends on the research questions you are seeking to answer' (Saunders et al 2009, p.109). Throughout the years three different approaches to research philosophy have been developed; ontology, epistemology and axiology.

#### ***4.2 Ontology***

According to Wetly (2003) ontology 'is the science of what is the kind's and structures of objects, properties, events, processes, and relations in every area of reality. Ontology is, put simply, about existence'. Bryman and Bell state that 'the central point of orientation here is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors or whether they can and

should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors' (2007, p.22). Essentially, ontology is concerned with the way the world works and can be divided into two aspects; objectivism and subjectivism.

Objectivism, according to Bryman et al, 'is an ontological position that implies that social phenomena confront us as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence' (2007, p.22). Where individuals hold this position it is their belief that common entities, for example organisations are all essentially the same, each one varying to a certain degree, and exist externally to social actors. Where this view is held the organisation will have more of an influence on the individual than the individual on the organisation.

Subjectivism, on the other hand, holds the view 'that social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors. What is more, this is a continual process in that through the process of social interaction these social phenomena are in a constant state of revision' (Saunders 2009, p.111). According to Ratner 'subjectivism dominates qualitative methodology'. It is through the use of subjectivism that researchers can interpret exchanges between themselves and the subject through such methods as interviews and focus groups. This enables the subject to express any feelings or ideas they may have in relation to the research matter also allowing the researcher to interpret it in a subjective manner.

### ***4.3 Epistemology***

Epistemology on the other hand 'concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline' (Bryman & Bell 2007, p.16). There are three distinct positions which can be taken by the researcher in relation to epistemology; positivism, realism and interpretivism.

According to Remenyi (1998) if your research reflects the philosophy of positivism 'you will prefer working with an observable social reality and that the end product of such research can be law like generalization similar to those produced by the physical and natural scientists' (as cited in Saunders et al 2009, p.113). One of the main ideas behind this perspective is that the factors being researched in the social world should be done so using objective methods while the researchers' findings remain free of any sensation, reaction or intuition. This links in clearly with the epistemological view that knowledge is only relevant when based on observations in the external reality. (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008)

According to Saunders et al, 'the essence of realism is that what the senses show us as reality is the truth: that objects have an existence independent of the human mind. The philosophy of realism is that there is a reality quite independent of the mind' (2009, p.114).

The interpretivism position of epistemology is considered to be a direct opposite of that of positivism. The writers of interpretivism 'share the view that the subject matter of the social sciences – people and their institutions – is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences. The study of the social world therefore requires a different logic of research procedure, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order' (Bryman et al 2007, p.17). This approach emphasizes the difference between conducting research on objects and on actual human beings and holds that as a result of this difference these two social factors cannot be researched and interpreted in the same way. One of the main reasons behind this is the fact that humans as social actors can each interpret differently their social roles along with the social roles of others.

#### ***4.4 Axiology***

The final approach to research philosophy is axiology. According to Saunders 'this is a branch of philosophy that studies judgments about the role of value' (2009, p.116). Heron (1996) argues 'that researchers demonstrate axiological skill by being able to articulate their values as a basis for making judgments about what research they are conducting and how they go about doing it' (as cited in Saunders 2009, p.116). It would be understandable for researchers holding this philosophy to conduct their research through interviews as they may feel they would be able to gain more insight to the subjects, i.e. the individuals' opinions and values.

The choice between the positivist and the interpretivist research philosophy has often been the source of great debate amongst researchers, with many arguing that choosing one position over the other in theory might be acceptable but in reality is somewhat unrealistic. Where this opinion is adopted the individual is known as a pragmatist. Pragmatism argues that 'the most important determinant of the epistemology, ontology and axiology you adopt is the research questions as one may be more appropriate than the other for answering particular questions' (Saunders 2009, p.109). According to Easterby-Smith et al a central theme of pragmatism is that 'in the social world there are no pre-determined theories or frameworks that shape knowledge and understanding' (2008, p.76). The concept behind the pragmatist approach to research mirrors that of the mixed methods to conducting research which uses both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques.



#### ***4.5 Deductive Theory***

According to Bryman et al (2007) 'deductive theory represents the commonest view of the nature of the relationship between theory and research'. Deductive theory is 'the dominant research approach in the natural sciences, where laws present the basis of explanation, allow the anticipation of phenomena, predict their occurrence and therefore permit them to be controlled' (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Where a deductive theory is used the researcher develops a theory or hypothesis and applies a research strategy to test it. This type of research is often associated with quantitative research.

#### ***4.6 Inductive Theory***

Where induction theory is involved 'theory is the outcome of research' (Bryman & Bell 2003) as opposed to research being the outcome of there with deduction theory. This approach is more closely associated with qualitative research and has a more flexible structure compared to that of the deductive approach. When a researcher applies the inductive approach they form their theory around their research. According to Saunders et al (2009) the inductive approach emphasizes 'gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events placing less of an emphasis on the need to generalise compared to that of deductive theory.

#### ***4.7 Combined Theory***

However, just like research philosophy and qualitative and quantitative research (discussed below), when dealing with inductive and deductive theory there are no rigid rules which state that the researcher must choose one or the other. According to Saunders et al (2009) 'not only is it perfectly possible to combine deduction and induction within the same piece of research, but also in our experience it is often advantageous to do so'.

#### ***4.8 Purpose of the Research***

When conducting any form of research the researcher must first clearly establish what exactly the purpose of the research is. According to Saunders et al 'the classification of research purpose most often used in the research methods literature is the threefold one of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory' (2009, p.139). However, it is important to recognize that one piece of research can have more than one purpose in the same way that a researcher can hold both a positivist and the interpretivist research philosophy, i.e. pragmatism. Robson (2002) also acknowledges that 'the purpose of your enquiry may change over time' (as cited in Saunders et al, 2009).

#### ***4.9 Exploratory Research***

Exploratory research enables the researcher to establish 'what is happening, to seek new insights, to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light' (Robson 2002, p.59). According to Saunders et al (2009) there are 'three principal ways of conducting this form of research:

1. A search of the literature
2. Interviewing experts in the subject
3. Conducting focus groups interviews'

One of the many advantages of the exploratory approach to research is that it is flexible and can be adjusted as a result of new data or insights. However, the researcher must also be prepared to change the direction of their research as the focus of research using this approach is 'initially broad and becomes progressively narrower as the research progresses' (Saunders et al 2009, p.140).

#### ***4.10 Descriptive Research***

Descriptive research on the other hand 'requires extensive previous knowledge of the situation to researched or described so the researcher knows appropriate aspects on which to gather information. The purpose of this research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations' (Robson 2002, p.59). According to Saunders et al, 'this may be an extension of, or a forerunner to, a piece of exploratory research or, more often, a piece of explanatory research. Unlike that of exploratory research it is necessary to have a clear and concise understanding of the research data that needs to be collected before any data is collected making it slightly less flexible.

#### ***4.11 Explanatory Research***

Explanatory research according to Saunders et al, are 'studies that establish causal relationships between variables' (2009, p.140). The main focus of this form of research is to study a situation and explain the relationship between the two variables in that relationship. Robson has identified the main purpose of this form of research as being 'to explain patterns relating to the phenomena being researched and identify relationships between aspects of the relationships' (2002, pp.59-60).

#### ***4.12 Methods of Data Collection***

It has already been established that before the researcher can begin to conduct their research they must first establish a number of things such as their research philosophy and the purpose of their research. However, this is not all they need to establish as they must also determine the methods through which they will collect their data, whether it will be qualitative or quantitative, 'terms which are used widely in business and management

research to differentiate both data collection techniques and data analysis procedures’ (Saunders et al 2009, p.151).

#### ***4.13 Qualitative Research***

Qualitative research ‘explores attitudes, behaviours and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups’ (Dawson 2010, p.14). Where researchers choose to use qualitative methods they will obtain data concerned with individuals’ perception and opinions meaning the significance of the data produced will be based on the quality of the research collected as opposed to the quantity. Where the qualitative approach to data collection is used researchers have a number of methods to choose from including interviews, focus groups, shadowing, etc.

Where a researcher chooses to use interviews in order to conduct their research they can either be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The main aim of a structured interview is to give all interviewees the same interview stimulus as any other (Bryman et al 2007, p.210). Using the structured approach to interviewing the researcher will ask all interviewees the exact same questions which will typically be very specific. It is often common for the interviewer to offer the interviewee a fixed range of answers.

Unstructured interviews on the other hand offer the respondents ‘almost full liberty to discuss reactions, opinions and behaviour on a particular issue’ (Ghauri et al 2005, p.132). Where unstructured interviews are used the interviewers’ main role is to provide lead questions and record the interviewees’ response.

The final approach to interviewing a researcher can take is to conduct what is known as semi-structured interviews. Where semi structured interviews are used ‘the researcher

will have a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from interview to interview' (Saunders et al 2009, p.320). The use of semi-structured interviews allows the interviewer to vary the questions they will ask in accordance with the individual they are interviewing. It may be necessary to use this approach to interviewing if the researcher is interviewing people from different areas for example what the human resource manager may be asked may differ to that of what the district operations manager is asked as they perform different tasks in the organisation with varying knowledge and perspectives.

#### ***4.14 Quantitative Research***

Quantitative research on the other hand works on the assumption that 'all human behaviour is open to measurement and that humans behave accordingly to some universal principles which can be identified and used to predict future behaviour' (Tarling & Crofts 1998, p.61). The results from this this form of data collection would be expressed in numerical form such as graphs, charts and statistics. Quantitative research is most commonly used where the research requires a large amount of individuals to be assessed. This is often the preferred option for researchers as it does not require the researcher themselves to interview each candidate individually. There are a number of approaches which can be used when conducting quantitative research including surveys, questionnaires, etc. While quantitative research is a useful tool in that it allows the researcher to gain a general overview of the groups perception of the issue it is often criticised for failing to recognise the difference between the 'social world' and the 'natural world' where the natural world follows a specific order and the social world is more subjective. (Saunders 2009).

#### ***4.15 Mixed Methods Research***

When choosing an appropriate approach to collecting research data the researcher may find it necessary to use a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods, this is what is known as mixed methods. Bryman & Bell (2007) describe the term mixed methods research as 'simple shorthand to stand for research that integrates quantitative and qualitative research within a single project' (p.642). This is often considered a good method of research as there is a better chance of gaining a well-rounded insight into the research area and also where qualitative methods may prove weak in one aspect quantitative research may prove very valuable and vice versa.

#### ***4.16 Selected Research Approach***

The aim of the research the author is undertaking is twofold; having set out to establish an appropriate recruitment and selection process for the contract cleaning company on which she was basing her research it soon became apparent that the theoretical side of this researched topic and the practical implications in relation to the organisation were not as compatible as was anticipated. Therefore the researcher aims to investigate the recruitment and selection practices of the organisation taking into consideration the fact that the available literature on the topic of recruitment and selection is merely a general overview with no distinct connection to the sector and unique requirements of the organisation in question. As a result of this the researcher also aims to investigate areas the available literature has failed to identify in relation to the organisations individual circumstances. In order to achieve this, the researcher has developed a research approach which she hopes will allow her to gain an accurate and unprejudiced insight into the recruitment and selection practices of the organisation.

#### ***4.17 Research Philosophy***

As the researcher is approaching this task as an external factor to the organisation it could be said that they are adopting the positivist approach of the epistemology philosophy. The research being conducted is done so in an objective way as the researcher has remained impartial to all activities in the organisation with no personal ties or opinions which could influence the findings of their work. The researcher has also used the approach of combined theory. This is evident as the aim of this research is not only to assess the organisations approach to recruitment and selection but also to evaluate the available theory related to the area.

#### ***4.18 Mixed Method Approach***

Having reviewed the available research tools the researcher found the most appropriate approach to take would be that of the mixed methods approach. One of the main reasons why the researcher chose to conduct their research using this approach was as a result of the wide range of individuals involved in the recruitment process within the organisation. As Grosvenor is a nationwide organisation with cleaning operatives in every county in Ireland they require their district operation managers to play a significant role in the recruitment and selection process. As a result of this, was the researcher to adopt a qualitative approach to their research methodology they would need to interview or shadow a wide variety of the district operations managers throughout the country. Due to both time and geographical constraints this was unrealistic. Therefore the researcher distributed a number of surveys to the district operations managers throughout the country in order to gain an insight into the general opinions concerning the recruitment and selection process. The researcher then chose at random a small number of individuals to interview in order to establish a clearer view of the process.

#### ***4.19 Population and Sampling***

According to Bryman & Bell when discussing research methodology the term population refers to 'the universe of units from which a sample is to be selected' (2007, p.730). In relation to this piece of research the population relates to the number of people involved in the recruitment and selection process of cleaning operatives which includes the human resource manager, the operations manager, district operations managers and client services managers.

Sampling, according to Easterby-Smith, is a 'subset of the population from which inferences are drawn based on evidence' (2008, p.332). In conducting their research the researcher had two sample groups. The first group consists of those who will participate in the quantitative aspect of the research through the completion of surveys. The second group will be considerably smaller and will consist of those the researcher will interview which include the human resource manager, the operations manager and two district operations managers together with an ex-employee of the organisation who was a central part of the recruitment process while employed by Grosvenor, for personal reasons this individual wishes to remain anonymous and for the purpose of this researcher will be referred to as Sam.

#### ***4.20 Ethical Considerations***

When conducting any form of research it is essential that the researcher do so in an ethical and just manner. According to Diener & Crandall when considering the ethical issues involved in research the individual must ask themselves:

1. Whether there is harm to participants
2. Whether there is a lack of informed consent



3. Whether there is an invasion of privacy
4. Whether deception is involved

(as cited in Bryman & Bell 2007)

While conducting this research the researcher was constantly aware of any ethical issues which may arise. While ensuring the researcher did not cross any ethical lines the researcher asked both the organisation and the individuals involved if they wish their identity to be acknowledged or if they wished to remain anonymous. In response to this the organisation gave the researcher permission to use their trading name while the current employees of Grosvenor also permitted the researcher to use their real names. However, as is mentioned above, the individual external to the organisation has expressed their wish to remain anonymous due to the nature of their current employment, this request has been respected.

#### ***4.21 Limitations***

While conducting this piece of research the researcher was faced with a number of limitations. One of the most notable limitations was that of time. As this research is being conducted for academic reasons there are time restraints in place. In order to work within these time restraints the researcher has used both surveys and interviews to collect her data. In different circumstances the researcher could have chosen to interview a wider array of individuals involved in recruitment processes with less significance being placed on the surveys. Time constraints both anticipated and unforeseen were a significant factor during the completion of this dissertation.

Another limitation incurred throughout this research was that of availability of individuals for both qualitative and quantitative research. As this research was conducted

during the summer months the researcher was unable to interview and survey a number of individuals as they were taking annual leave at the time.

## ***Chapter 5 Research Findings***

Throughout the practical research carried out on the recruitment and selection practices of the Grosvenor Group the researcher identified a number of factors which contributed greatly to the findings of her research. It is important to note that the research being conducted was based solely on the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives, the research does not address the recruitment and selection methods practiced for higher level positions such as operations managers, business executives, etc.

Before a proper analysis of the recruitment and selection process of this organisation could take place the researcher found it important to first establish a clear understanding of the structure of the organisation as well as who exactly is involved in the process. While the organisations main offices are located in Dublin there are 1,800 cleaning operatives working on numerous sites based throughout the country, where there are cleaning operatives working on a larger site there will be a site manager (approximately 8 throughout the country). There are then 24 client service managers who are responsible for the general running of a number of sites. These managers then report to the district operations managers who, in conjunction with the human resource department, are responsible for the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives among numerous other tasks.

It is evident from the above layout of the organisation that the recruitment and selection process is not as straight forward if it were compared to that of an organisation operating in one sole location such as an accountancy firm. As a result of this the organisations requirements are unique and require careful consideration in order to best meet their needs. However through the analysis of the surveys and interviews conducted the researcher identified a number of areas where the organisation failed to address issues in their approach to the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives.

Throughout the course of this research the researcher distributed surveys to 15 district operation managers of which 9 were successfully returned, the researcher then based her interview questions on issues highlighted in the surveys and the findings of the literature review. The results are as follows.

### ***5.1 Findings***

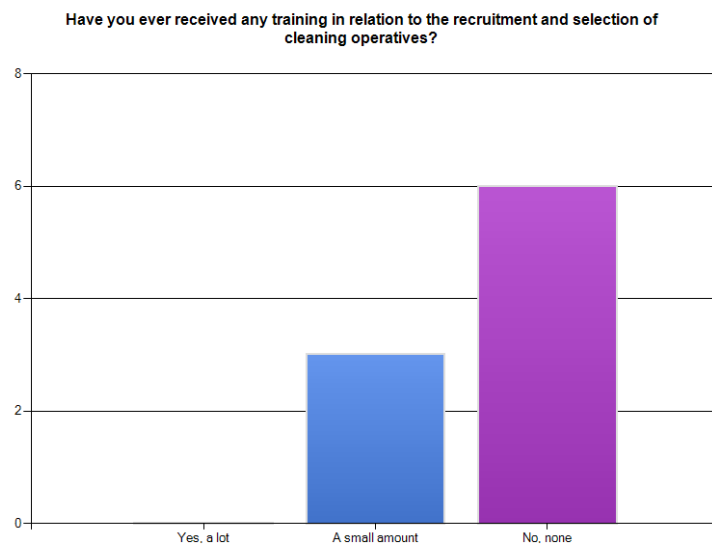
The findings of the practical research carried out highlight a number of areas where the academically recommended stages of recruitment and selection as outlined in the literature review are not carried out or, in some instances, even relevant in the recruitment and selection of operation level staff in Grosvenor.

### ***5.2 Individuals involved***

Of the successfully returned surveys it was found that all district operations managers are central characters in the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives, more so than that of human resources as the human resource manager highlighted that:

*‘The cleaning operative end of things is probably at the lower end of recruitment and one that I don’t get involved in’.*

Although the district operation managers play a major role in the recruitment and selection process when asked if they had received any training on the matter 67% responded that they have never received training from the company while the remaining 33% responded that they have only received a small amount in the past.

**Figure 1**

In the interviews conducted with the district operations managers the issue of training in relation to the recruitment and selection process proved to be one of great concern as one district operations manager stated, when asked have they ever received any form of training in relation to recruitment and selection, that:

*'We have never gotten any official training. But I defiantly think there would be huge benefits from people getting trained properly at recruitment. I think it needs serious attention. I would certainly say recruitment training would be a huge plus, definitely.'*

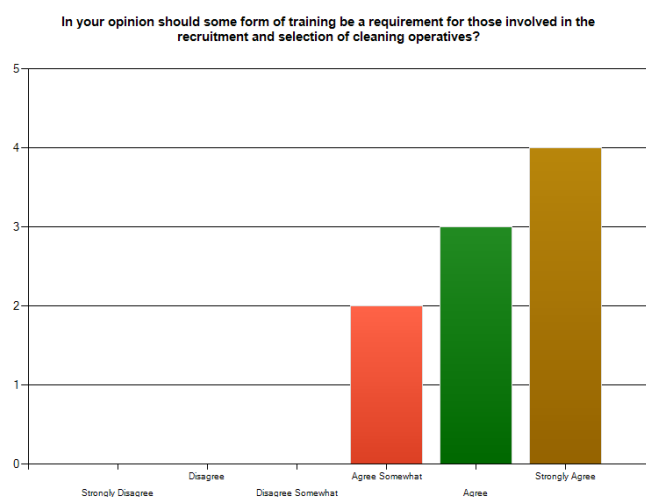
While another district operations manager, when asked the same question, commented that:

*'It would definitely be beneficial to every one of us because you can't remember everything all the time. Things are changing so rapidly and what we might have known to be fact last year has changed'*

In the case of the 33% who, in the survey, stated that they had received a small amount of training, upon further investigation, it was discovered that this training took place approximately two years ago and was not given to all managers involved in the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives for numerous reasons such as; some were off on leave or were unable to attend the training due to more pressing commitments or simply because the district operations manager was not employed in that position at the time of the training.

Through the analysis of the surveys it was discovered that while no proper training has been made available for those involved in the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives the vast majority (45%) of district operations managers agreed strongly that there should be some form of training requirement while the remaining 55% varies between agreeing somewhat and just agreeing.

**Figure 2**



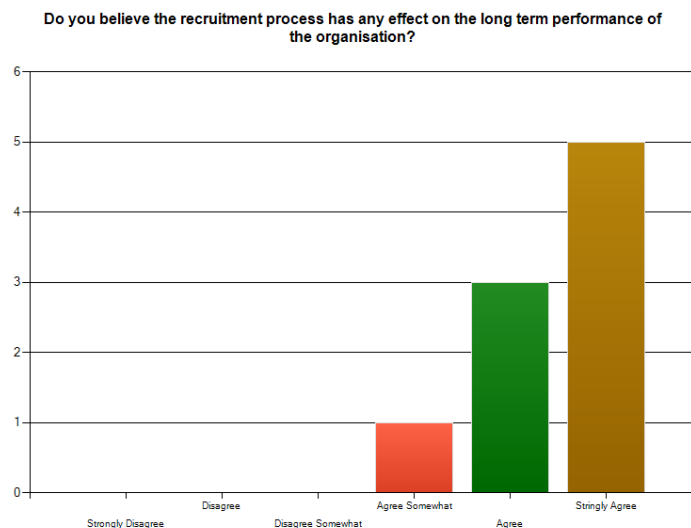
### ***5.3 Recruitment and Performance***

It was also discovered through the survey findings that to varying degrees all of the district operations managers surveyed believed that the recruitment and selection of

operation level employees has an effect on the long term performance of the organisation (fig. 5.3), with one respondent stating that:

*‘the staff you employ represent the company and should be your greatest asset’.*

**Figure 3**



## 5.4 Structure

While interviewing the human resource manager of Grosvenor it was also highlighted that one issue relating to the recruitment and selection of operation level staff which the organisation has found difficult to overcome due to the nature of its work is that of structure, something which was reiterated in both the surveys and in other interviews conducted. In chapter 2 of this dissertation it was discovered that, theoretically speaking, when recruiting any level of staff organisations must go through a structured process compiled of a number of sequential steps from assessing the need for staff straight through to evaluating the process. However, throughout the practical research conducted the validity of such a structure was brought into question, as the human resource manager pointed out in the interview.



*'I think structure depends on the organisation. Here for the cleaning operatives' jobs it may not have been possible to sit down and have an interview; it might not always work for a couple of reasons. Number one you might need a bum on the seat at that minute or the person might have quite poor English and as long as they know how to operate machines and what chemicals to use or not to use then is there any point in asking them to describe various things or taking them through their experience, you know what I mean? If they can do the job they can do the job '.*

In the interview conducted with the ex-employee who for the purpose of this research is to be called Sam, they too highlighted this factor stating that while they worked there

*'one of our goals were to make sure we were recruiting people who had the skills to do [the job]. Obviously that had to be weighed up as well with the time pressures to get someone in; like in the cleaning industry for example literally they might need somebody that night so they might ring their friend or a friend of a friend it is not always practical to do the proper vetting and procedures. It's grand to say theoretically this is what you are supposed to be doing but you have the people on the ground that needs people in now because someone might be sick.'*

### **5.5 Time Constraints**

Grosvenor employs approximately 2,000 cleaning operatives at any one time. However, at a level of unskilled employment such as this, high levels of turnover and low commitment are very much the norm. While the company did acknowledge the fact that they suffered high turnover with this level of staff they were unable to provide me with any figures as they were not available to them. It was fair to conclude however that their

retention rate at this level is significantly low and impacts their recruitment and selection greatly. In an interview with one district operations manager, when asked typically how long they have to fill a vacancy they replied:

*‘Well if they follow procedures that we ask them to follow, we normally ask people to provide two weeks’ notice in writing, then we will have two weeks. However there are cases where we don’t get that and there are times when we are expecting people to be on site and the customer might ring you to say no one showed up then you are left an operative down and you have to try and get someone in as quickly as possible’.*

When asked in the survey if they believe the recruitment process needs to be improved one respondent agreed and commented that:

*‘the process we currently have in place is sufficient but quite often we need to employ someone at very short notice’.*

Through the findings of both the surveys distributed and the interviews conducted it was evident that the speed at which some forms of recruitment need to take place is a major issue for those involved in the process in Grosvenor. However, it was also found that there are a number of ways this can be dealt with by the district operations managers, with one stating that

*‘when this happens I will try and fill the position with a person that is willing to cover; they will be offered the position if they don’t want it they will cover until we can fill it with a permanent body preferably as soon as possible’.*

### ***5.6 Assessing staff requirements***

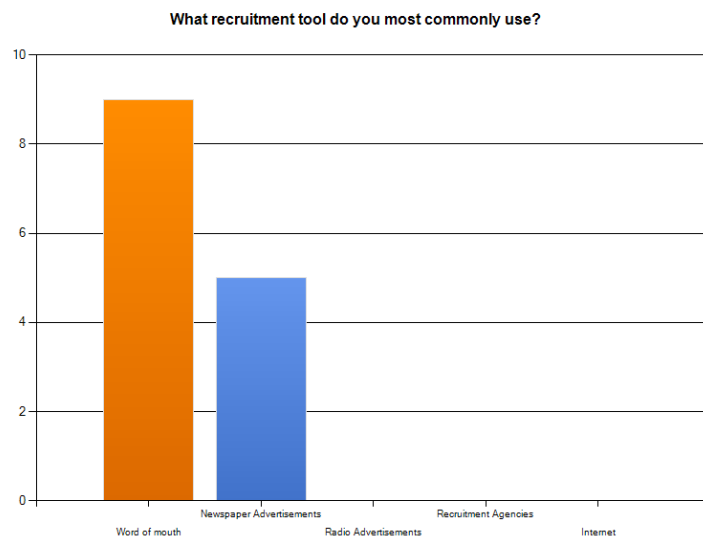
As part of the literature review one of the first recommended steps in the recruitment and selection process is forecasting the need for staff. Although it has been established that the organisation suffers from unforeseen absences and resignations, it was also brought to the attention of the researcher that, where the organisation secures a contract they are often given a stated period of time in which to recruit the required amount of cleaning operatives. While interviewing the human resource manager she revealed that they use the working back from cost approach to predicting staffing requirements in these situations, as discussed on page 23 of the literature review, as she stated that:

*‘we assess the need for staff based on what the client wants to spend on us’.*

### ***5.7 Recruiting Candidates***

Another aspect of recruitment and selection which played a significant role in the literature review was that of the effective and most common methods used to recruit potential candidates, see page 28. The researcher felt it was important to establish what methods were used in the recruitment of operation level staff and as a result asked those interviewed and surveyed for their input. Of the district operation managers surveyed an astonishing 100% of them used word of mouth as a recruitment tool while 56% also used newspaper advertisements where necessary.

Figure 4



Through an interview with a district operations manager it was explained that:

*‘probably the most popular way is always through somebody who already has been working on the site, if I had to give a percentage, it is probably 80-85% of the way recruitment is done. The word of mouth approach comes in handy because you can ask different cleaners in the area if they know somebody looking for work or whatever. In the cleaning industry a lot is word of mouth because I’m not going to recommend someone unless I know they won’t let me down or reflect badly on me. It shouldn’t reflect on the person but they might feel that it will. Normally when people recommend someone we ask them to get them to send in their CV.’*

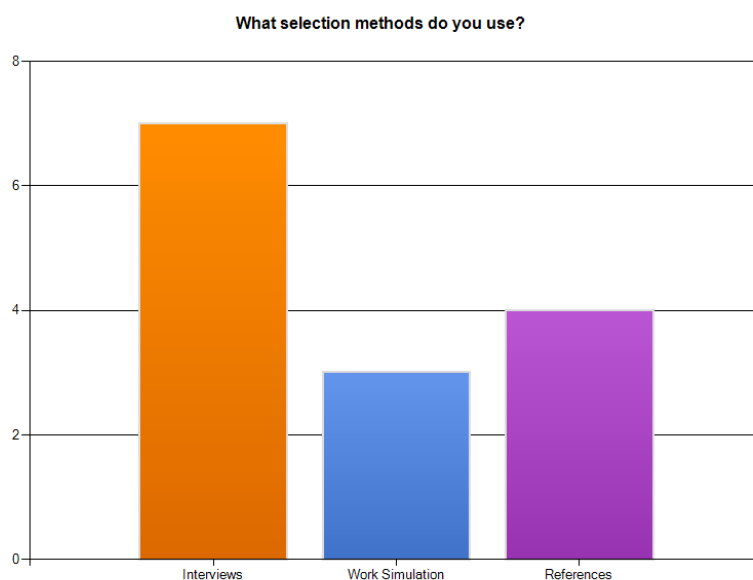
Through both the surveys and interviews it was established that this informal approach to recruitment was a very effective and cost efficient one especially in situations where a cleaning operative leaves unexpectedly. However, although word of mouth is a very commonly used approach to recruitment those involved in the process also have the support of the human resource team who will provide them with any CV’s that have been

sent into the organisation ad hoc. Where neither of these approaches provides successful results the organisation will then place an advertisement in the local newspaper. It is clear to see from these findings that the preferred and often most effective approach to attracting candidates is that of the informal approach of word of mouth.

### **5.8 Selection**

Once potential candidates have been recruited it is necessary for a selection process to take place. The literature review provides a number of selection methods available to organisations today from the more traditional interviews and reference letters to assessment centres and psychometric testing. Through the analysis of the surveys returned and the interviews conducted it was found that while there are a number of options available to the district operation managers the most commonly used methods are that of interviews and references letters with some managers using work simulation.

**Figure 5**



As the most commonly used approach in the recruitment of cleaning operatives is the informal method of word of mouth the researcher felt it was important to establish whether there was actually a selection process in place or if the managers hired those recommended at their word, when asked if this was the case one district manager responded:

*'I always ask for a CV, I don't know if that is what everyone else does but I personally always ask for a CV. It doesn't matter who it comes from unless I actually physically know the person and know their history but I will still always ask for a CV. It's good to have one on file apart from anything else and then if there are references we can check.'*

While another district manager stated *'I will interview them myself'*.

Reference checks were the second most popular method used in the selection of staff, as they are used by 45% of district operation managers. However, through the interviews conducted it was established that there are a number of problems which can arise where this form of recruitment is involved. In an interview with a district operations manager it was noted that:

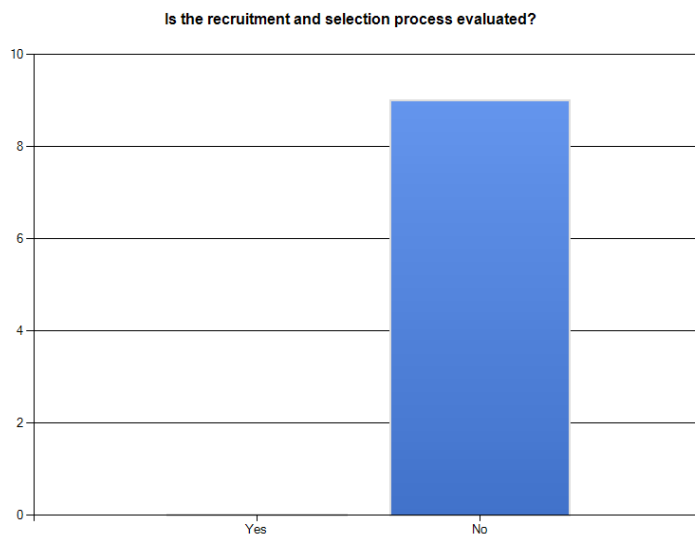
*'it is very difficult to check references on CV's because they might have just come from Brazil or they might have just come from Mauritius or China or whatever so there is an element of trust involved and gut instinct as well'.*

## **5.9 Evaluation**

In the literature review conducted for the purpose of this dissertation the importance of evaluation was highlighted. While completing the practical research the researcher used both the surveys distributed and the interviews conducted to establish the

evaluation methods used by the organisation. However it was soon discovered that currently there is no form of evaluation carried out on the recruitment and selection methods adopted by Grosvenor.

Figure 6



However, when asked if they thought an evaluation of the process would be beneficial one district operation manager responded:

*'Yes. I mean absolutely, any improvement in the recruitment process would be hugely beneficial. People tend to live with what they have sometimes. People accept sometimes the good and the bad in recruitment as in when they hire somebody they might be 70% happy with them and say 'aw it'll do'. The 'it'll do' attitude everybody is guilty of it to a certain extent'*

Although there is no current evaluation process in place the human resource manager has expressed her intention to implement one as part of the impending recruitment and selection policy that will be designed in the near future. When asked how

she would assess the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection and ensure the district operation manager would comply with it she responded:

‘O spot checks. They are brilliant. Surprise visits that sort of thing. If I know somebody is interviewing today I might just turn up and go ‘O I’ll sit in with you. Away you go I’ll take notes kind of thing’.

### ***5.10 Transfer of Undertakings***

In an organisation such as Grosvenor the piece of legislation governing the transfer of undertakings is one of the most significant and must be treated accordingly. However it was established that the organisation has incurred difficulties with this in the past as managers failed to carry out necessary requirements, mainly paperwork, where a transfer of undertaking occurred resulting in serious repercussions for the organisation.

### ***5.11 Non-national Employees***

One issue which has become more prevalent in the last ten years or so is the influx of non-nationals into the Irish labour market, most significantly in lower skilled jobs such as that of cleaning operatives. In Grosvenor, non-national employees account for approximately 50% of cleaning operatives varying from EU members to Chinese, Brazilians, etc. As was highlighted in the literature review (page 46) where an organisation employs non-nationals there are a number of factors which need to be addressed. Visas and proper documentation are a major issue here as an individual cannot work for an organisation unless they hold the proper legal paperwork e.g. working visa. This was reiterated in the interviews; while interviewing a district operations manager one question asked was ‘what are the legal issues you need to take into consideration when recruiting’ to which they replied:



*'You always have the visas, work permits, stuff like that, part of the process being that if you decide to recruit somebody, it's not one of the first questions I'd ask but if they are from wherever I'll always ask them what kind of visa they have, as in if it's a student visa, a work permit or whatever it happens to be; because you don't want to waste somebody's time either'.*

It was also highlighted through the interviews that this issue has caused problems for Grosvenor in the past. While interviewing the ex-employee they stated that:

*'one issue was because people know people like brothers, daughters, sisters there was no proper checking done of new recruits like simple things of checking proper documentation for foreign nationals or anything, knowing whether or not they need a visa, if they are EU or aren't they. We used to have problems with Romania and Bulgaria because the law is slightly different even though they are part of the EU because they joined the EU last they've got to instil certain checks'.*

Although the issue of language barriers was addressed in the interviews it was established that this was not a major area of concern as one district manager stated that:

*'English is important but we don't always have that and again I mean I have some of the best cleaners working for us who haven't got a word of English. If there was a position where there was a number of people working on the site and where someone already on the site spoke the language then maybe I will try and put the individual in the position and I would have no issue with that'.*

### **5.12 Equality**

It was mentioned at the beginning of this section that employees involved in the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives have received very little or in some cases no training in the area. In a sector which attract all kinds of individuals especially those of different nationalities and as a consequence different religions the researcher thought it to be appropriate to ask the district managers interviewed if they were ever made aware of the Equality act and if they could list the nine grounds of discrimination outlined by it. In one response a district operations manager responded:

*‘No. I could probably hazard a guess at them like race, religion, disability. I don’t know after that. If I really thought about it I could probably get it but no. And that is a gaping hole in the recruitment process you might say’*

### **5.13 Garda Clearance**

As Grosvenor hold contracts in a number of state buildings throughout Ireland such as courthouses one issue which they need to consider in relation to recruitment and selection is Garda clearance/vetting, see page 47. Through the analysis of the interviews and surveys it was evident that this was a major area of concern for all involved in the recruitment and selection process as one district operation manager points out:

*‘this is again a recruitment concern when you’re hiring somebody. We’d have to tell them they would have to go and get court clearance, security or Garda clearance or something like that and sometimes it throws up problems mainly because it takes so long they can’t afford to wait for the work so they find a job elsewhere’.*

The waiting period for an individual’s necessary clearance to come through is a major concern for Grosvenor and one which proves more difficult to overcome than others.

It can also affect district operations managers' decision to choose one individual over another. When asked in an interview 'If someone was to apply for the position in a courthouse and they already had their clearance would they automatically get the job over the other applicants?' they replied:

*'They probably would be to be honest because you can put them into the position straight away; it's not ideal'*

However, when a situation such as this arises the district manager also identified a way of addressing the situation, stating that:

*'what I might do is put them on a temporary contract for maybe three months. If you really wanted to hire the other person as well, you could get the other person vetted and if you were in a position to put them somewhere else you could'*

It is clear from the interviews conducted that the organisation is under significant pressure where Garda clearance is involved for which there seems to be little they can do about it. When discussing this issue with the ex-employee they explained that:

*'in this country the problem is the time it takes and also myself and the operations manager did some work ourselves in the company to even get on the list to vet people yourself and there is like a six months waiting list and even then you're not guaranteed to get on the list because they only put people on the list if you are a priority'*

It is clear to see from these findings that the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives holds a number of issues for any organisation. Throughout the course of this research it has become clear that there are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration when discussing the process of recruitment and selection in Grosvenor. While

the literature review outlined some of the stages involved in this activity and approaches that can be taken it is essential that the needs of the organisation are addressed in order to ensure the recruitment and selection process is effective

## ***Chapter 6 Discussion & Conclusion***

Throughout this dissertation the theoretical and practical aspects of the recruitment and selection process were examined. The literature review conducted highlighted the recommended stages and approaches that can be taken while the practical research i.e. interviews and surveys, assessed their validity in the fast paced environment of Grosvenor.

The research objectives of this dissertation, as stated on page 49, are as follows:

4. Evaluate the theoretical aspect of recruitment and selection.
5. Identify the recruitment and selection approaches used by the organisation.
6. Establish the effectiveness of their approach making recommendations where appropriate.

Although the literature review identified the different approaches to recruitment and selection as recommended in numerous, text books, journals, articles and from other sources it was evident from the practical research that there were factors which had not been taken into consideration by both the literature and the organisation itself.

Recruitment and selection is portrayed in the literature review as an essential process carried out using sequential steps with each one having an important part to play in the appointment of the perfect candidate for the job. It identifies that the process is important not just to fill a vacant position but also to address the needs of the organisation in their bid to achieve the ever coveted 'competitive advantage', as Armstrong once said 'people add value to the firm' (2006 p.119). However when this theory was applied to the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives in Grosvenor there were a number of inconsistencies and variables which needed to be addressed.

### ***6.1 Assessment and Recruitment***

Before an organisation begins to look for staff there are a number of issues which have to be dealt with. In the case of Grosvenor, assessing the need for staff falls into two categories; unexpected resignations and new contracts.

As was addressed in the previous chapter, when discussing cleaning operatives one of the main issues the organisation faces is the high level of staff turnover. This often occurs through employees failing to turn up to work only for it to be later discovered that the employee has decided to leave the organisation. In many cases, when this occurs the organisation cannot afford the time to assess the situation and follow the prescribed steps as highlighted in the literature review as the position will need to be filled as soon as possible. This is a clear example of literature failing to meet reality as the individual needs of the organisation require an immediate solution as opposed to the more timely process outlined in the literature review.

Although the district operations managers have identified a way to address these situations when they do arise through temporarily filling the position with another member of staff allowing them more time to find an appropriate individual to fill the position on a permanent basis the inability of the stages set out in the literature review to address the recruitment and selection needs of organisation are evident. It is suggested on page 24 that, an integral stage in the recruitment of employees is to carry out a job design using a number of different approaches such as work shadowing in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the skills, capabilities and knowledge required. However, in the case of Grosvenor this would be considered not only time consuming but also unnecessary as the role of cleaning operatives is general to all employees at that level regardless of the site or

region they are in. A more appropriate option and one which is currently in place in the organisation is the use of a 'general job description' which is applied to all cleaning operative roles thereby eliminating the need to conduct a job analysis every time an employee leaves or a new position becomes available, something which happens on a regular basis at this level in the organisation.

While the availability of a general job description for cleaning operatives is hugely beneficial there are other issues such as the actual recruitment of candidates which prove problematic under such time constraints. This is a well-known issue within the organisation and one which management feel formal methods of recruitment cannot overcome. As a result of this one of the most commonly used methods of recruitment in Grosvenor is the informal approach of 'word of mouth'. In the literature review one of the advantages of this approach to recruitment was stated as 'candidates who are recruited by word of mouth self-select to a greater degree than those finding out about the job from other sources'. It is argued that this provides the individual with a greater understanding of what will be expected of them and whether or not they will be a suitable match to the position. This theory was verified in an interview when a district operations manager revealed that in the past they have found the cleaning operatives recruited through word of mouth to be more willing to work and proved to be a better fit with the organisation because they were much more aware of what would be expected of them compared to someone recruited through the more formal methods (see Appendix 2, page 120).

Although it could be suggested that the organisation maintains a list of individuals willing to fill in at short notice to overcome this prominent issue of unforeseen job vacancies in Grosvenor, the practicality of it is questionable. While the organisation would benefit



greatly from having a number of individuals they could call upon only when required it is unrealistic to expect that anyone would wait patiently to be called with no idea of when they may be needed, for how long or even where. Recruitment agencies are also an option when discussing this issue however, through an interview with the human resource manager it was established that while they may prove beneficial regarding time constraints they are costly and as a result are not an option, (see appendix 2, page 110).

The more favourable approach to recruitment and selection in the organisation takes place where the company secures a contract and as a result has an allocated period of time in which to recruit cleaning operatives. This allows the organisation to commit more time and resources to the recruitment process and potentially yield better results. Through the literature review a number of approaches were identified in assessing the need for staff which includes: systematic techniques, managerial judgement and working back from cost (see page 20). It was established in the interview stage of the research that, where new contracts are involved the organisation uses the latter approach of working back from cost to successfully predict the need for staff as they are allocated a specific amount to spend on cleaning operatives through the terms of the agreed contract.

It would be unadvisable for the organisation to use systematic techniques in assessing the need for staff as the staffing needs of the organisation as little as a year ago may be completely different to their staffing needs of today as it depends on a number of factors including the amount and size of contracts the organisation holds at any one time.

## **6.2 Selection**

Once potential candidates have been identified the next stage is selection. The literature review outlines a number of approaches which can be taken in the selection of

potential new employees from the classic trio to the more complex approaches of assessment centres. Taking into consideration the level of skill, knowledge and competence required for cleaning operative positions along with the high rate of turnover it would not be necessary or advisable for Grosvenor to adopt such time and cost expensive methods of selection such as that of psychometric testing.

As can be seen in the previous chapter the district operation managers of Grosvenor use the relatively low cost and time efficient methods of interviews, references and in some circumstances job simulation in order to select the appropriate candidate. Although there are a number of criticisms outlined in the literature review regarding the use of interviews and reference checks as methods of selection, in the case of Grosvenor they can prove to be among the most appropriate. It can be argued that their efficiency in addressing the need for staff immediately, combined with the level of competence, knowledge and skill required for the position are factors which can prove very beneficial to the organisation as interviews can be conducted not only in person but also over the phone while reference checks can be conducted at a moment's notice.

However, the selection methods adopted by the district operation managers' show a number of variations. For example, while experience was commonly cited as an advantage in the selection of staff, the weight it held on the decision making process varied from manager to manager as one explained how they prefer to hire someone with experience as the company does not provide them with a training budget while another explained that while experience is beneficial it is often preferable if the candidate does not have too much as there is less chance of bad habits.

Another issue which arose when discussing the selection process with regard to interviews was the degree of formality in which they are carried out. While one district operations manager may hold formal interviews with the candidates another may choose a very informal laid back approach as was discovered through the interviews conducted. Considering all these variations in the selection of cleaning operatives it is clear to see that this is an issue Grosvenor need to address.

Taking into consideration the findings of both the literature review and the practical research carried out the researcher believes that interviewing, reference checks and in some situations work simulation, are both advisable and sufficient keeping in mind the financial and time constraints in place. However, these methods of selection were chosen by each manager individually as opposed to being recognised as the formal approach taken by the organisation. Although the unique circumstances of Grosvenor need to be taken into consideration when discussing any stage of the recruitment and selection process the significance a clearly defined process holds is great and must be highlighted. As there are 15 district operation managers working throughout the country this means that currently and as a result of the unstructured approach to recruitment and selection in the organisation, there are 15 different approaches being taken to the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives within the one organisation.

### ***6.3 Structure***

From the issues highlighted above it is clear to see that while those involved in the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives in Grosvenor are adopting a number of steps which, based on the findings of the literature review and the practical research conducted, are advisable and effective there are a number of areas which need to be

addressed in order to ensure the organisations recruitment and selection procedure is as effective and efficient as possible.

The main issue which became evident was the structure of the process or rather the lack of. Throughout the literature review the process of recruitment and selection was portrayed in the form of a number of sequential stages each one holding a particular role in the recruitment and selection of staff. Although it has been proved that while some of these stages may be necessary in other organisations they do not apply to the unique recruitment and selection requirements of Grosvenor, nevertheless the general concept is one which would prove beneficial to the organisation. However it is not just the development of a formal structure the organisation would benefit from but also the implementation of guidelines and training programmes to ensure the district operation managers are fully aware of the 'best practice' for this form of recruitment as recommended by the organisation itself.

In order to successfully achieve this Grosvenor must first develop a formal structure which clearly outlines the steps to be taken whether the position needs to be filled immediately or within a set period of time. The research findings set out in the previous chapter prove that where positions needs to be filled immediately an effective approach is to recruit through word of mouth using interviews and references as the selection method. However, although this is the currently recruitment and selection method being practiced, the degree to which it is carried out can vary dramatically. As a result it is the recommendation of the researcher that the organisation provides their district operation managers with clearly defined guidelines to be adhered to in the recruitment and selection of staff from the methods used in the recruitment stages, whether it is through word of

mouth, CV's sent in ad hoc or through advertisements. They should also be provided with the proper steps to be followed when selecting an employee. This should include the process to be used, e.g. interviews, reference checks or work simulations. Where interviews are the chosen option the questions to be asked and not asked should also be clearly defined.

#### ***6.4 Evaluation***

Although it is important for the organisation to develop a recruitment and selection programme which is tailored to their own individual needs it is also essential that they adopt an effective evaluation method in order to ensure the procedures they are practicing are as efficient and effective as possible in meeting these needs. In the literature review the importance of evaluation was highlighted as it is necessary for the organisation to understand if they are actually gaining from the procedures they have in place. However, through the surveys returned and the interviews carried out it was established that at present the organisation has no procedures in place to assess the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection methods practiced when hiring cleaning operatives.

It is strongly recommended that, in the near future, the organisation introduce measures to such as the one proposed in the literature review, see page 42, to assess the effectiveness of their recruitment and selection process. This will not only aid the organisation in meeting their staffing needs but will also facilitate the district operation managers in establishing a sense of the right and wrong approaches to take.

#### ***6.5 Legal and other considerations***

Although it is essential that the organisation develop a structured recruitment and selection procedure in order to ensure they employ the right individual there are other

factors to be considered when discussing the benefits of this. As we have mentioned in the literature review, see page 26, the ever pressing matter of the equality act means that every organisation, regardless of the sector or the calibre of individuals they are trying to recruit, need to ensure that they are doing so in a matter which complies with the equality act with special consideration being placed on the nine grounds of discrimination. However when asked in the interview if they could name these nine grounds one district manager responded that he could probably hazard a guess but had no previous recollection of them highlighting the fact that the organisation had made no attempt to inform them of any matters.

This should be an area of major concern for the organisation especially as this level and type of work attracts a diverse array of individuals coming from different countries, regions, backgrounds, etc. Where an organisation fails to recognise this they are susceptible to not only legal implications but also risk portraying a negative image of the company and its brand were a situation based on discrimination to arise. It is recommendable that the organisation provides their district operation managers with not only training on the matter but also an outline of the act and the implications breaches of the act can have on the organisation and the individual.

Another issue which strongly affects the recruitment and selection of employees relates to Garda vetting for those working in government offices, as described in the findings in the previous chapter. Although this is a major issue for the organisation there are few options available to them as the period of time it takes for clearance to come through is outside the control of the organisation. However, one option available is to ensure that there is at least two people in every region who are legally viable to work in government

buildings and available to move between site if required. Although this is not a permanent solution it will provide the organisation with some time to allocate an appropriate permanent replacement.

### ***6.6 Training***

It is the researchers strong opinion that the issues which have become evident through the course of this research can be addressed not only with the implementation of a proper recruitment and selection process but also with the training of district operation managers on the subject and issues relating to it. In relation to areas such as the equality act, the checking of proper documentation, etc. it is strongly advised that the organisation make these managers aware of the repercussions failure to comply can have not only on the organisation but on the individuals themselves.

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## ***Appendices***

***Appendix 1: Surveys Distributed to District Operation Managers*****Note from the researcher:**

My name is Louise Reynolds; I am a student in the National College of Ireland completing a Masters in Human Resource Management. As part of this course I am obliged to write a thesis based on a human resource related issue, for which I need to conduct a small amount of research into an organisation. Mary Horgan has kindly granted me access to the company in order to conduct my research. The topic I will be researching is recruitment. The research I will be conducting is independent of the company and serves solely as a research tool for my thesis. I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey as it is a critical component of my thesis.

**Survey Questions for DOMs & CSMs**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Position in the company: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Time with the company: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you have any involvement in the recruitment of cleaning operatives?
  - a. No, none at all
  - b. A small amount
  - c. Yes, a lot
5. If option b. or c. applies please elaborate.

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6. Have you ever received any training in relation to the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives?
  - a. No, none
  - b. A small amount
  - c. Yes, a lot
7. If option b. or c. applies please elaborate.

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8. In your opinion should some form of training be a requirement for those involved in the recruitment and selection of cleaning operatives?

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Disagree

9. Do you believe the recruitment process has any effect on the long term performance of the organisation?

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Disagree

10. If so, how?

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11. Do you believe the recruitment process used in recruiting cleaning operatives is effective/adequate?

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Disagree

12. Do you believe this recruitment process can/ needs to be improved?

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly Disagree

13. If you agree, in your opinion, how can it be improved?

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14. Have you ever experienced difficulties with cleaning operatives which could have been avoided if the recruitment process was better adapted to the needs of the company?

a. Yes

b. No

15. If yes, please elaborate.

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16. What are the main capabilities/skills you look for when recruiting cleaning operatives?

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17. Do you check for references?

a. Always

b. Sometimes

c. Never

18. Are cleaning operatives security checked?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

19. If so, how is this achieved?

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20. What recruitment tool do you most commonly use?

- a. Word of mouth
- b. Newspaper Advertisements
- c. Radio Advertisements
- d. Recruitment Agencies
- e. Internet

21. What selection methods do you use?

- a. Interviews
- b. Work Simulation
- c. Reference checks

22. Is the recruitment and selection process evaluated?

- a. Yes
- b. No

23. If so, how?

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***Appendix 2: Interviews***

The following interview took place with the Human Resource manager of Grosvenor (A) conducted by the researcher (L).

**L:** Does Grosvenor have a structured recruitment and selection process in place?

**A:** I think structure depends on the organisation and I'm a very structured individual so previously for example even for lower level jobs in my last job it would have been very structured because it was a law firm and retail would have kind of almost been haphazard that sort of thing so I suppose it depends on the organisation. Here for the cleaning operatives' jobs it may not have been possible to sit down and have an interview; it might not always work for a couple of reasons. Number one you might need a bum on the seat at that minute or the person might have quite poor English and as long as they know how to operate machines and what chemicals to use or not to use then is there any point in asking them to describe various things or taking them through their experience, you know what I mean? If they can do the job they can do the job, you know?

**L:** Would there be a difference between the recruitment process in place for a position that needs to be filled immediately and positions that need to be filled in six weeks as a result of a new contract?

**A:** Yes, I can give you two recent examples of that actually. One, for a certain number of our buildings we need security clearance for the staff working in them, for any of the Garda buildings, for any of the state buildings, they will need to be cleared by security, by Garda security before they can work in that organisation. We have a one woman operation in a courthouse somewhere and she is gone out sick so the CSM, the client service manager herself, has been cleaning the courthouse for the last number of days. Now, she can get somebody who lives another county away and who is security cleared, Garda vetted but it is probably more feasible for her to do it than pay somebody to drive for 60 miles there and 60 miles home to do a three hour job every day, you know? So that is an example of where either the person will clean themselves until the person comes back which isn't such a great thing or will try and get cover from within. More recently we had a situation in a bigger operation where we have 60 cleaners, where our shift patterns were changed by the client.

So we would have ladies and gents cleaning in the morning, cleaning in the afternoon and cleaning in the evening. The client recently said I do not want an evening cleaning anymore. So we now have 10 people who have been made redundant as a result of the fact that their night time job is gone. We still need to service this client and we still need 10 other workers to put those workers in the morning so we are recruiting through an ad in the local newspaper and there will be hundreds of people who will go for 10 jobs. They will probably send in applications, etc. and we will screen it that way and that will be more structured because we need to get it going.

**L:** So, you do use both formal and informal recruitment methods?

**A:** I wasn't around at the beginning of some of these really big contracts with you know 20 plus operatives on site. If we know in advance that in a month we are going to be starting somewhere that gives us the opportunity to have a formalised structured approach to things. Unless of course that it is a transfer of undertakings where we are going in and taking 20 odd cleaners from another company.

**L:** Would you use agencies to fill vacancies or for recruitment?

**A:** Not for cleaning operatives, it is too expensive.

**L:** If you needed somebody temporary and you can't fill the position how would you deal with that?

**A:** We would more often than not be able to fill the position internally. It makes more financial sense to pay somebody who is already doing the job somewhere else to travel then to pay an agency fee. Because you will always have a bunch of people, and I remember years ago when I was a student and I was a waitress I always wanted extra hours because I always wanted the money. So I'm guessing it is a little bit like that, if there is somebody that is used to doing say, I don't know, 15 to 20 hours a week, and there is the opportunity of extra hours for holidays or sick cover then we will always have somebody who wants those extra hours.

**L:** Does the company have a formal, written down recruitment policy?



**A:** No, that is on one of my 'to do' lists. It has to be done but it is not my biggest priority at this time.

**L:** Do trade unions affect the recruitment process of cleaning operatives?

**A:** So far they haven't. I think people have different views of trade unions. Management here would accept the fact that trade unions are part and parcel of life as a cleaning operative. I have quite an open relationship with them. So when I start any job that is unionised I want to meet the officials and that is what I have done. So that I have a good personal, face to face, relationship with them. So I'll know who I'm talking to I'll know what he likes or she likes etc. At the moment there are two main people I would deal with from SIPTU. SIPTU has recently been reorganised so that they have various industrial organisers and they are easy personalities to deal with. At the end of the day they are people trying to do their job as well. We just have to except the fact that they are sometimes looking for things that we just cannot give. They are quite involved in a situation we have in Galway at the moment that is quite a big 60 person job but that has nothing to do with recruitment.

**L:** Can you explain to me what exactly transfer of undertakings is and how does it affect the company?

**A:** Well it has been around since about 2003, 2005 maybe. First of all it is a relatively new legislation; this is my first time working in an environment with that legislation. It is where there is a transfer of a business or part of a business from one company to another. The receiving company is the taking on all of the other company's responsibilities not only their debts but also their employees and their current conditions of employment. When a staff member is involved in a transfer of undertakings a couple of things happen or don't happen. So the employees' terms and conditions remain the same, his service is not broken. So for example, you might be taking over a business here, we just got a contract where there are eight people, and some of those people might have been working for various cleaners on this site for twenty years. If we decide in a months' time that we don't need 8 cleaners and we are going to make two of them redundant we are paying them based on twenty years service not based on two months service. Also if an employee is transferring under transfer of undertakings and their rate of pay in the old company is 10.50 an hour and the new company only want to pay 9.50 an hour they actually have to pay 10.50 an hour or buy the

employee out. But if my terms and conditions are less favourable in my old job to my new job I am entitled to the more favourable terms and conditions.

**L:** When a transfer of undertakings occurs in this company, as in the company are taking on the new contract is there a checklist used to ensure the new employees coming in comply with the requirements set out by the company?

**A:** Yes, absolutely. There is a check list the sales department would be the people who negotiate the transfer in the first place and negotiate the contract. Actually the sales and operations work together in negotiating the contracts or tendering the contract. So then HR would get questions from sales going there are four new people coming in under this contract however three of them are on 10.50 an hour and one of them is on 9.50 what can we do etc. etc. or do we have pensions here because two of them are coming with pensions and things like that. Then the other thing about it is if we are tendering for a contract, and an instance of this happened very soon after I started. On onsite there was 12 cleaning operatives working there. When our sales person went in he couldn't understand why so many people were working there because they were only doing 5 and 20 hours between them instead of perhaps half that number doing maybe 30 hours each per week or something like that but genuinely increasing the hours and working a little bit smarter. This was an interesting negotiation because before we signed the contract we agreed with the old people to change the conditions of the employees before they came to us. So they made six people or four people redundant before they came over to us.

**L:** What is your opinion of the recruitment in place for when you need someone either tomorrow and when you need them in 6 weeks?

**A:** I don't like it, I am not a fan of ad hoc recruitment and I never have been. I think it is a mistake waiting to happen if you like, you don't know who you're getting. Even if somebody says I know somebody who can do it, if it is only for short time like holiday cover or sick cover then maybe it's not so bad. But I much prefer the structured approach to recruitment at any level reference checking etc. Because really there are so many people in this country and it is so easy to miss something when you are recruiting someone and all of us in this building and in all the buildings we service we have access to a huge amount of information and personal property belonging to other people etc. it is important that we know who we

are getting and that they are as trustworthy as a person can possibly be and we have done as much as we can to check that. I'm not sure if I answered that question correctly but I very much favour the structured approach, always.

**L:** And how would you structure recruitment and selection ideally?

**A:** for cleaning operatives and around that level I would initially put in place a recruitment policy, which is on the cards by the way. It will involve strict training for district operation managers and client service managers so it will be a more structured approach like this one here. So it will be questions and I like behavioural questions so you can flush out all the debris, tick the boxes, check at least one reference before we put them live on the floor etc. and do it like that and how do we do that? We do that by training our individuals to do it and what I would have done in the past is I would have done an interview and have someone with me to do a bit of a role play etc. just so I can say this is how you do an interview, this is how you talk to people, this is how you welcome someone to an interview, these are the questions you do not ask and even if it is a question of having a little list of things I cannot ask this person. You would be surprised what I have seen in the past actually you probably wouldn't. 'O so how many children do you have? And your husband black? O my god!! O you're a protestant! O how awful for you' you know you just can't ask these questions.

**L:** And do you think this can be implemented successfully?

**A:** It will have to be, it won't be an option. At the moment I have just completed a different policy with our payroll we won't have an option but to put it in place. Now I am working on a more technical aspect of things with the district operation managers so for example people have to get paid whatever about getting them in the door we have to pay them correctly and they have to be taxed, ok, it's called the law and it is revenue. So that is a policy I'm working on and to me it is more important because people will always have difficulty with payment. We have district operations managers meetings monthly and at that I'll role out that policy followed by the recruitment policy followed by putting in place training dates.

**L:** How would you evaluate this, make sure it is being put into place by the district managers?

**A:** O spot checks. They are brilliant. Surprise visits that sort of thing. If I know somebody is interviewing today I might just turn up and go 'O I'll sit in with you. Away you go I'll take notes kind of thing'.

**L:** Would turnover be high among cleaning operatives?

**A:** O definitely, yes. I can't give you a figure which is really sad because I don't have one to give to you. But yes it would be and I think perhaps some of the statistics would be skewed because we might have somebody that was working for a building for 25 years but they might only be working with us for 2 years maybe so that will probably skew that persons turnover. If then we lose that contract and we don't get them back that type of thing. But turnover is high and I noticed this in previous employment but I wonder if it's the same here, it was always higher in Dublin than it was outside of Dublin certainly in more rural areas. Perhaps because we have greater access to employment in the capital or in cities, you know bigger cities. But we have people who have been here for 30 years, it is amazing. In this office we have people who have been here 30 years but we have cleaners who have been in the business for a long time.

**L:** Are there any promotion opportunities within the company available to cleaning operatives?

**A:** Yes. That is how most of our client service managers happened. Most of those ladies, because they are nearly all ladies our client service managers, they have all made their way up whether with us or with somebody else but yeah in the various areas they work in.

**L:** So you wouldn't really need to advertise client service manager positions?

**A:** Well at the moment we are about to because we are creating a new position in one of the regions because we don't have the expertise in the people we have so we are reorganising. Or as I said to our operations manager 'we are reorganising' and he said 'what is that word you just invented?' So we are reorganising that particular area and it will be an external person just so we have some external expertise at a management level.

**L:** And do you think the cleaning operatives will have any issues with that?

**A:** O yes because you get used to people, don't you? So there is always the element of change which isn't always welcome. And people always associate change with lose don't they? Ok that is a blanket statement but it is rare that somebody at a certain level will see an external recruit, a change in an organisation, as beneficial.

**L:** How do you advertise the positions of client service managers and cleaning operatives?

**A:** Cleaning operatives would be local advertisements maybe in local newspapers, local free newspapers that type of thing. I think of the one in my own area there are always two or three pages of jobs at the back and it is reasonably cheap it is only about 200 euro or something to place an ad maybe even cheaper. Client service managers I am about to put an ad on my LinkedIn page, that type of thing because that's free and you never know who you are going to get. And of course the more connections you have the greater your net and the less the cost. It is also the only social media network I would trust and use as opposed to any of the others. I'm not interested in going on to facebook and saying 'how many cakes did you eat at the party?', you know I only use LinkedIn because I use it for a reason for connections and things like this, for what I can get out of anybody else and I'm sure they the same to me but you make great connections that way, which is so off the point but anyway.

**L:** How does the company assess the need for staff?

**A:** It is assessed based on what the client wants to spend on us.

**L:** So it would be working back from cost?

**A:** Yes. That is exactly how it is. If that is not feasible various negotiations are entered into to maybe increase that. What very much happens is if we start a new contract and they have given us X amount and we realise after two or three months we need another bit to do this then that is usually approached in a way that will secure us that extra amount of time of resources of machinery of equipment of whatever.

**L:** When discussing recruitment in any context one of the most commonly referred to approaches is that of the classic trio; cv's/application forms, interviews and references. To what extent is that relevant in the recruitment of cleaning operatives?

**A:** Well not for cleaning operatives. Why do you need an application form and a CV? Our application form has lots of basic details on it. What do we need? We need your bank details, we need your next of kin in case of an emergency we need your address we need your p.p.s number and we need the name and number of two references that we can check. The back of our application form tells the person everything we will do for them, terms and conditions, etc. So it is a one page document. On top of that they will get their employee handbook which is just a little book but it has everything. I actually quite like this employee handbook because it sets out things quite usefully and which I would always think of telling people but not everybody does. So, for example, it has here when I start a new job I should phone revenue and give them this number which is great. It shows me how my holidays are calculated and little chunks like that. It tells me what to do if I have a problem, etc. what kinds of leave I'm entitled to, what bullying means, all of this. It is a very handy little handbook. So they get that along with their contract. So sorry I have diverted yet again. Application forms for that type of job yes. CV's not necessary; I think that is an example of double-jobbing. References definitely, which we don't do but definitely.

**L:** Do you put on the application form that references are required?

**A:** Yes. Sometimes if they are young or if it is their first job in Ireland then maybe we won't be able to contact anyone and literary you are just going in bare with the person. You never know what people are going to say. I prefer telephone references; I would actually like face-to-face references but naturally that is not ever going to happen. But I don't like written references. I can remember it must have been about 15 years ago, getting this very flowery reference from somebody working in a retail environment and I was looking at it going 'O that's great'. And I looked at the name of the company and I was nearly sure they had gone out of business. So I looked and they had, she had faked it and she'd copied and pasted all kinds of things and I thought that is so clever but she has actually forged a reference, the person didn't exist, the company had gone out of business, it was interesting.

**L:** So if you were to get 10 applications for 10 positions would those applicants automatically get the jobs?

**A:** I know that is what happens. I would imagine, and hopefully the district operations manager will tell you differently, but I'd say what happens is they see somebody, they have

filled in the form correctly, they seem like a nice person, they have some experience lets start them tomorrow. If I was recruiting a job, lets imagine now, I was recruiting and it has happened sometimes before in the past. I was recruiting about a year ago for a secretarial position myself and the CEO at the time because it was for a secretary for him interviewed 31 people and didn't find one person. Eventually we got somebody on word of mouth. So I would be quite particular about personality types and everything working together. If I was getting another person to say work beside me in the office every day I certainly wouldn't get some loud person who wants to talk as much as I do I wouldn't get somebody like that. I would get somebody who is milder as I am who is more thoughtful about things, who isn't so impulsive.

**L:** What are the main issues when you are recruiting? For example is it the calibre of staff, the quantity, time.

**A:** Because I haven't recruited cleaning operatives I am going to give this a guess. I would think speed is the most important thing to them. It is getting this job filled. I would think calibre of staff they would like to think that is important but they probably don't put enough emphasis on it. But I would imagine it is about how fast they can get somebody.

**L:** Are there any legal or sector regulation you need to consider where recruitment is involved?

**A:** I suppose apart from transfer of undertakings, which isn't really recruitment it is more taking what you are given. We were guided by the JLC up to a few weeks ago, I think it was great by the way but anyway, I can't believe it is unconstitutional. Well I know there was a problem about two years ago I heard there were people working under different names, different p.p.s numbers because they were committing fraud and we had a bit of an amnesty here where we had to tell them they could keep their job if they told us what their real name was so there was a bit of that going on. So I know the first thing that we do here is get them to fill in an application form that goes to payroll so it has all their details including their p.p.s number so at least then payroll can check their p.p.s number against the name and address. So that is one thing that is done now that wasn't and is a consideration in the recruitment process.

**L:** Are there any things you feel I need to take into consideration that I haven't addressed today?

**A:** No, I think that, this is going to come out a little bit wrong but I'm going to say it. The cleaning operative end of things is probably at the lower end of recruitment and one that I don't get involved in. I think it is not done properly, not always. I think we have a wide range of skill in our operation managers and as a result not everybody sticks to rules and regulations I know one of the district managers you will interview does. I can't think of any other considerations. I have to say the number of issues we have with staff might not always be solved if we changed our recruitment policy. You still have the same old same old things happening. You still have people phoning in sick all the time, you still have people doing fake sickies that sort of thing; you still have theft of product. There has never been things I'm dealing with so far that I haven't seen before or that seems to be exclusive to the cleaning industry or something that could be fixed by doing recruitment a different way.



The following interview took place between the researcher (L) and a district operations manager (D).

**L:** Can you describe the recruitment process of cleaning operatives?

**D:** Well it depends how you come across the person first of all. You will either come across them from a CV from the office and if that's the case then obviously you will have a look at the CV before you meet the person.

**L:** And would that CV just be sent in by chance or sent in in response to an ad?

**D:** Yeah, very possibly someone will ring up and ask, most of the time the CV's we get are people ringing up looking for work and we will always say to them send in your CV and we will be in contact. Then depending on the area of the city the person is living in or wants to work in, or the country or whatever, then it depends who the CV will be sent to. So, let's say I get all the CV's from the south side of Dublin, actually probably Dublin in general because people do travel. So yes, that is one of the ways; I suppose my contact with people. The other way and probably the most popular way is always through somebody who already has been working on the site. So say for instance somebody's friend has just come into the country, somebody's sister, somebody's brother, somebody's mother, whatever. And that's probably, I would say, that's probably; if I had to give a percentage, probably 80-85% of the way recruitment is done.

**L:** And then is there a selection process?

**D:** Well, it depends on the site. It all very much depends on the site the location, the time of the contract and the type of contract it is. Sometimes you would need somebody with a particular set of skills that has done certain tasks before. I would always try to hire somebody who has experience in the cleaning industry. I wouldn't rule out somebody who doesn't but I always prefer to try and get somebody who has some experience in the cleaning industry because it always makes the training process easier. We don't have a training budget per se and I suppose that's a fault within the company in a sense we don't have a training budget which allows us to pick somebody off the street to use certain machinery and do certain tasks. It is honestly easier to have somebody who has done the job before then to try and train somebody up with no budget and no time to do it.

**L:** Do you think that the recruitment process is effective in the company?

**D:** It is effective in certain circumstances, yes. We picked people in various different ways to do various different jobs and it has been hugely successful. Like we have picked new people who have never worked in the cleaning industry before, never done anything, just came into the country literally never held a broom before in their lives before and have turned out to be someone amazing, some of the best people. It's effective. It's not fair to say yes it's hugely effective or it's not effective because there is pro's and con's with both. I mean I can have somebody who has 10 years cleaning experience and on the other side of town have someone who has never cleaned before and that person could be far better because maybe this person has picked up hugely bad habits over the years or whatever that happens to be. The other person though is fresh young wants to learn or whatever. So there are certain pros and cons with both ways of doing it. Certainly I would have found when you are recruiting someone word of mouth as in, like, sometimes we find it difficult to recruit for certain times of the day maybe, something like that, or certain position or certain location and you know you won't get someone to travel out to a isolated location or whatever, somebody who doesn't drive you might need someone who drives or you might need someone who will travel a great distance to get to the job so very often the people that will do that for you are the 'word of mouth' people. The reason why I say that is because a lot of the time those types of people have just come into the country, they are looking for work, they are hungry for work. I mean their cousin or their friend might be working for us also and there is also an element of responsibility for the person who is already working for us as in this person is not going to let you down this is my sister my brother whatever, that kind of thing. So there is a certain responsibility that is passed along the line as well.

**L:** Do you think an element to that is that the individual coming in is aware of what is expected of them, they are not coming in blind?

**D:** Absolutely, yes that is a huge part of it and the brother or the sister or whoever is saying 'look I am helping you get this job I'm not getting it for you but I'm helping you get this job. Don't make me look like a fool, don't let me down'. So that is a huge contributing factor as well to the success of that part of the recruitment. It doesn't always work like every

recruitment process doesn't always work but you do have a little bit of a cushion you might say when it comes to that.

**L:** You mentioned there about needing to send people to locations unexpectedly. Would it be common in this line of work for people to decide today they're not coming back to work?

**D:** O yes every day.

**L:** And does the recruitment process here facilitate you when that does happen?

**D:** In a certain way it does I mean that happens all the time. It only happened this week on a very difficult location. What happens then in a certain circumstance is, depending, this is a very difficult location to get staff for; do I have to get clearance. Like there is security clearance, Garda clearance, court clearance all those kind of things we have to take into account on recruitment as well. So depending on the location, like this is a court location and it is an extremely difficult location to get people to because you need court clearance and stuff like that. So that is again a recruitment concern when you're hiring somebody. We'd have to tell them they would have to go and get court clearance, security or Garda clearance or something like that and sometimes it throws up problems. They may say 'o well can't do that I can't work there because when I was 21 I done something stupid'. To cover a short term when someone leaves quickly we'll always have someone who can fill in for a couple of days. We'll always have someone we can pull from another site while we are recruiting. Now sometimes very often I have gotten text messages probably on a daily basis sometimes phone calls on a daily basis people looking for work and it is a case of somebody who is working for us gives someone else my number and they'll text or ring asking for work. So you will get a lot of that as well.

**L:** When you get them through word of mouth would you still ask for a CV or what happens?

**D:** O absolutely yes I always ask for a CV, I don't know if that is what everyone else does but I personally always ask for a CV. It doesn't matter who it comes from unless I actually physically know the person and know their history but I will still always ask for a CV. It's good to have one on file apart from anything else and then if there are references we can check. I mean it is very difficult to check references on CV's because they might be just come from Brazil or they might have just come from Mauritius or China or whatever so there is an

element of trust involved and gut instinct as well. But very quickly you will know if the person can do the job or not. But absolutely I will always ask for a CV.

**L:** And then how would you assess their suitability to the position?

**D:** I wouldn't interview them in the sense that I would sit down and ask them 25 questions. I have always conducted interviews in a more relaxed manner. I always find you get more out of somebody, depending on the type of person or job you are hiring for. If you are hiring for someone to work two or three or four hours a day as a cleaner, I mean, the most intellectual people in the world don't make the best cleaners in the world, you are looking for different things from people. I would have a very relaxed conversation with somebody, actually try and get to know them a little bit more than what they have done I will actually try and get to know the person because what they have on the piece of paper could be complete fabrication and I can't prove that. So I try and get to know the person what they are doing in Ireland, why they are here it may sound irrelevant but you get to know what a person is like by having a conversation that way. Now if I was hiring for a different position say for maybe a supervisor or that I would have a completely different type of interview I would have a more formal type of interview. Obviously you want to know their supervisory experience and what have you but if it is solely for a cleaner I will try and make the person seem as relaxed as possible and try to find out about the person rather than what is on the paper.

**L:** Would you ask them competency question?

**D:** Again it all depends on the position I was hiring for. I would ask them certain questions I thought at the time were relevant; I always find I know talking to somebody. Good grasp of English is always important. We don't always have that and again I mean I have some of the best cleaners working for us who haven't got a word of English but they have perfect knowledge of English when it comes to getting paid or they are missing an hour or they are missing something like that their English all of a sudden is absolutely perfect. I think there is a certain comfort because they can kind of plead a little bit of ignorance nearly. Especially the English language, if I was hiring for a certain position and this person really hadn't got a word of English well then you know I couldn't put them in that position but if there was a position where there was a number of people working on the site and where someone already on the site spoke the language then maybe I will put the individual in the position

and I would have no issue with that. But, yes absolutely with certain competency questions I will certainly ask.

**L:** You mentioned there about recruiting for supervisors is that done internally through promotion or is it done externally?

**D:** Yes both, we have recruited through promotion we have recruited externally I mean we have advertised for supervisors on numerous employment agencies and websites and stuff like that and people have come through as cleaners. We have area managers now who started out as cleaners and client service managers who have started out as cleaners so yes absolutely both.

**L:** Do you think there is a preferable or more effective method of the two?

**D:** Supervisors that have come through the cleaning industry have worked as cleaners. I'd find they will have a certain style, they are the front line the ones dealing with cleaners on a daily basis. Somebody who has worked as a cleaner and worked their way through knows what's going on they know the little tricks and what the cleaners get up to and don't get up to. But they also have a better respect from the cleaners because the cleaners know they have done the job, whereas somebody who has never actually done the job is suddenly coming in giving them orders. It sometimes happens that they take offence to it. If they do it in the wrong tone or you just get the wrong cleaner. So personally I like somebody who has come through the industry and they are usually a wealth of knowledge as well to be honest with you. I would not discount anybody; you know I didn't come through the cleaning industry so that would be like discounting myself. But you know I have supervisors who have been in the cleaning industry for 30 years, there are a lot of bad habits, and there are a lot of very good habits. I think the good habits definitely outweigh the bad habits so if I had my preference I would probably say someone coming through the cleaning industry, someone who has previous experience but I wouldn't rule anybody out.

**L:** Would many of your supervisors come from being cleaning operatives in the company here?

**D:** Yeah, absolutely. This industry is quite ancestral in that there is not that many big cleaning companies say in Dublin and particularly supervisors, a lot of them have worked for

other cleaning companies over the years, everybody knows everybody in this industry so people have come and gone from the industry. Three of my client service managers at the moment have come up through the company from cleaners up to supervisors.

**L:** Do you think the promotion opportunities are incentives for people to stay on with the company?

**D:** I would have said that maybe two years ago but things have obviously changed in the industry, people aren't leaving their positions now, and supervisors' aren't moving from company to company now as much as they would have done previously so the opportunities aren't as great now as they were. Haven't said that though, you have a lot of site supervisor positions coming up very often but that would be the first kind of stepping stone from cleaner. Those positions would definitely come on board not as much as they used to. I would have said yes to that question before but people are holding on to their positions now for different reasons, to keep their job more so than anything else. So yes I would have said that was a factor a year or two ago not so much now.

**L:** And with the recruitment of the supervisors again would it be through CV's and interviews?

**D:** Yes absolutely because you have a different set of skills. They are dealing directly with clients; you are looking for a different set of skills completely.

**L:** How are the applicants for these positions attracted?

**D:** Well recently I rang HR looking for CV's and I know this sounds ridiculous, you have all these people on the live register looking for work and that but I just couldn't fill a couple of positions and I talked to HR and she didn't actually have many CV's at the time but she sent me over a number of good CV's and we filled the positions at the time. But I'd always take the CV's because you never know when you will need them. Say for a supervisor position, it is very often that is someone you have earmarked as a really good cleaner a good candidate would be suitable to a supervisory role. If I'm looking for a supervisor I'll always try to look from within first, asking who we have that will step up to the mark. Always look from within and then look externally by advertising the position.

**L:** What are the main challenges you face where recruitment is involved?

**D:** The quality of the staff can be an issue but that's a historical industry issue because people in this industry have never valued their job as in cleaners have never really valued their job because they have always been devalued by clients, customers as 'ah they are just the cleaners' you know that is a mind set in the industry that is hard to break. People don't value their positions and that leads to huge problems in that there was a stigma problem and I suppose there still is to a certain extent. It can cause a recruitment problem in itself; we have all sorts working for us. We have highly qualified people working for us; they can't get work in their own field so they are working for us. But the stigma problem creates a problem where people don't value their own position and when they don't value their own position they don't do their job properly and they can't take any pride in it, it's not everybody but it is a problem.

**L:** When you know a position is becoming available, would your first thought be it has to be filled immediately or would it be to take your time and put thought into the process?

**D:** Again, it depends on the position. If I have somebody I can immediately put in to cover that's no problem then give that person the extra few hours, that person might be looking for an extra few hours and would be happy to do it. Then you can kind of take your time in carrying out the recruitment and get the right person in. Sometimes you don't have that luxury, you need to get somebody in today and that's when the word of mouth approach comes in handy because you can ask different cleaners in the area if they know somebody looking for work or whatever. Or sometimes I often go back through my phone and say X, Y and Z is looking for work and it can be easy that way. It really depends on if you have someone who can step into the breach just to help you out while you're recruiting and have to take your time but sometimes you just have no choice.

**L:** When you are recruiting are there any legal issues you need to take in to consideration?

**D:** You always have the visas, work permits, stuff like that, part of the process being that if you decide to recruit somebody, it's not one of the first questions I'd ask but if they are from wherever I'll always ask them what kind of visa they have, as in if it's a student visa, a work permit or whatever it happens to be. Because sometimes you don't want to waste

somebody's time either. I mean if you're sitting with somebody and they clearly don't have the right paper work you don't want to waste their time along with your own. So you find out what kind of visa they have, if they are in college or if they are where ever; depending on what country they are from you will know what paper work they require. If it's an EU country they are fine they can work, if they are Romanian they will need a permit or whatever, if it is a student visa that will limit them to the amount of hours they can work. Obviously again, if I am hiring someone for a certain location, as in the ones clearance is required for, I will always state to them that they will have to be vetted before starting and then there is a form they fill in and it is sent out.

**L:** Is clearance or vetting a problem when it comes to recruitment?

**D:** An absolute nightmare! Doing the vetting is fine we have very little to do with the process because we can only facilitate the process the problem is it takes so long to get an answer. In the court services it takes about two and a half months to get an answer. There is a huge problem if I am hiring someone today but it is in a courthouse even if they are ready to start today it'll be three and a half months before I can start them in the courthouse. By the time the vetting is cleared the candidate will have got a different job somewhere else and you can't blame them for that. So that is a huge process and the then problem is when I'm vetting for one position say in a court I will get 3 or 4 people vetted at the same time for the position because I know for a fact come the return of the vetting forms 90% of the people will be gone to other jobs, unless I can give them work somewhere else in the meantime because people can't be hanging around waiting for work.

**L:** If someone was to apply for the position in a courthouse and they already had their clearance would they automatically get the job over the other applicants?

**D:** They probably would be to be honest because you can put them into the position straight away; it's not ideal. Or what I might do is put them on a temporary contract for maybe three months. If you really wanted to hire the other person as well, you could get the other person vetted and if you were in a position to put them somewhere else you could. You're hiring two people but the first person is only on a temporary contract.

**L:** Is there any training available for district managers on recruitment?



**D:** We have never gotten any official training. Now I have had training in previous organisations I worked in but never had any direct training here, no.

**L:** Have you been provided with anything regarding recruitment and selection?

**D:** I remember they sent out some kind of guidelines 12 months ago maybe more I can't really remember. Besides that, no.

**L:** Do you think it would be beneficial to have some form of training?

**D:** Hugely beneficial. What I have said to you today that is my way of recruiting; that is what I try to instil on my supervisors but my way of recruitment might be completely different to somebody who is working in Cork or Galway. Within the company as it stands there are no hard and fast rules to say this is the way we recruit. Every supervisor or every manager is probably recruiting slightly differently; they are probably all based on basically the same principal but you can be sure most of them are recruiting word of mouth, unless it's for a certain position that you want certain skills. I would say most of it is word of mouth. I would no doubt say that a huge amount of recruitment that goes on in this company is hearing about some ones sister or brother or whoever and just saying 'o great sure bring them in tomorrow'. I don't know if that still goes on; I'm sure it still does.

**L:** Do you think recruitment could be improved through training?

**D:** I would think so. Again, you will always get the argument from managers and supervisors that are recruiting that there isn't enough time they need someone to start tonight. I initially wanted to get a 'bank of people' you might say of temporary people you could call on for sickness and stuff like that. You wouldn't give them a permanent contract you'd give them a cover contract so you could call on them when they are needed. It was a bit idealistic in the sense that people aren't going to hang around the phone waiting for a call. It would be great if you could do that, if you could hire people like that if they were in a position to wait. That would solve a lot of problems; you would have them already hired, you would have them vetted, you would have them trained and it would just be a matter of putting them onto the site and teaching them the do's and don'ts of that particular site. It would have been nice to be able to do that but realistically it is not possible. But yes I defiantly think there would be huge benefits from people getting trained properly at recruitment. I

think it needs serious attention. I would certainly say recruitment training would be a huge plus, definitely.

**L:** Is there any evaluation to the recruitment?

**D:** Not really no, to be honest.

**L:** And do you think that would be beneficial?

**D:** Yes. I mean absolutely, any improvement in the recruitment process. Again, people tend to live with what they have sometimes. People accept sometimes the good and the bad in recruitment as in when they hire somebody they might be 70% happy with them and say 'aw it'll do'. The 'it'll do' attitude everybody is guilty of it to a certain extent. No matter what way you do recruitment, you could have the best person on paper this person might have everything but it doesn't make them the best person, no matter what you could bring them through every recruitment stage you could ask them every question you could test them on machinery you could do everything with them they just mightn't be good at the job. You could get someone off the street who has never used the machinery before you could put a little bit of time into training them, it could just be complete word of mouth and then they could turn out to be the best person for the job. It is very hit and miss and that is any recruitment industry or any recruitment for any job really.

**L:** Finally, would you be aware of the Equality Act or has the company ever highlighted it?

**D:** No. I could probably hazard a guess at them like race, religion, disability. I don't know after that. If I really thought about it I could probably get it but no. And that is a gaping hole in the recruitment process you might say.

The following interview took place between the researcher (L) and an ex-employee of the organisation who for the sake of this research will be referred to as Sam (S).

**L:** Did you work with the organisation long?

**S:** Yeah I did. I worked with them for a couple of years.

**L:** What were your main roles?

**S:** Well because of the nature of the business anything to do with HR and training basically and quality and health and safety, I suppose. A little bit of everything really because it is a smallish company you would be involved in everything from going to the labour relations court to ordering in certain items; the whole spectrum really.

**L:** What was your opinion of the recruitment process of the cleaning operatives when you were there?

**S:** We did some work on it, one of mine and the operations managers' goals were to make sure we were recruiting people who had the skills to do it. Obviously that had to be weighed up as well with the time pressures to get someone in; like in the cleaning industry for example literally they might need somebody that night so they might ring their friend or a friend of a friend it is not always practical to do the proper vetting and procedures. This is what you get back from the people on the ground. It's grand to say theoretically this is what you are supposed to be doing but you have the people on the ground that need people in now because someone might be sick.

**L:** You mentioned vetting there; do you think it would be beneficial to have everybody vetted for when those situations arise?

**S:** Well in this country it's the time it takes and also myself and the operations manager did some work ourselves in the company to even get on the list to vet people yourself and there is like a six months waiting list and even then you're not guaranteed to get on the list because they only put people on the list if you are a priority; any company can't just get on the list so that is a massive problem in this country. You could be waiting 12 or 13 weeks and you need to get someone on your side in. The only way around it is to have a lot of people vetted, so it is very difficult. Whereas in the UK you can get what is called a CRB

check and literally any company can do that, they can have someone vetted in a couple of weeks.

**L:** While you were in Grosvenor what did you think were the main issues with the recruitment of the cleaning operatives, if any?

**S:** Well one issue was because people know people like brothers, daughters, sisters there was no proper checking done of new recruits like simple things of checking proper documentation for foreign nationals or anything, knowing whether or not they need a visa, if they are EU or aren't they. We used to have problems with Romania and Bulgaria because the law is slightly different even though they are part of the EU because they joined the EU last they've got to instil certain checks.

**L:** So the recruitment process was very informal?

**S:** It would have been yes. Now what we did was we actually trained up all the staff on these things; so the Bulgarian Romanian issues, there was a check list that they follow to say what paperwork needs to be accounted for. Photo i.ds were important because obviously you get people who bring in documents and they look nothing like them and they'd get passed through the system like they do everywhere it's not unique to the company.

**L:** In your time there who made the decision that somebody needed to be hired for different positions and sites?

**S:** It would either be the area manager or the area supervisors; so they'd get a phone call to say someone is sick or gone on holiday leave or whatever so.

**L:** And was that effective most of the time or how was it perceived?

**S:** O yeah it worked out but then what me and the operations managers done or what we started to do was put in place a proper training plan where they are shown how to use things properly, little things like that. But sometimes when recruiting for people to cover you are usually pressed for time and that has to be sorted with operations. As I said it's ok in theory and reading the books but operationally you have customers' screaming saying I'm paying for 6 people why is there only 5.

**L:** So when recruiting for cleaning operatives there would be no real selection process?

**S:** No, not really if it is just a general operative's role. If it was for a district operations manager or something like that yes but if it is just a general operative unless it was a really prestigious contract depending on the role and how quickly we needed a person in I suppose. Time is a key element.

**L:** Would there be a high level of turnover among cleaning operatives?

**S:** Among cleaning operatives yes there would be. It might just be people looking for summer work or students on summer holidays or whatever.

**L:** In your experience, would there be a lot of non-nationals?

**S:** Yeah there'd be a lot of Polish, Romanian, etc. It depends on the type of site really.

**L:** While you were working with the organisation did any issues ever arise which you thought should have been spotted at the recruitment stage?

**S:** Yeah there'd be certain little issues about people might get treated differently, or family relatives, or documentation that should have been checked. Little things like when you do an audit on their files and there isn't a copy of their files. Little things really that should be done to start an employee; proof of id proof of address etc. There was a lot of that work that had to be done, checking visa's etc. But to be fair to the recruiters they may only be experienced cleaners and you are expecting them to know all this, you really have to train them.

**L:** With such a diversity of employees do you think discrimination would ever be an issue when it comes to recruiting?

**S:** I suppose it depends really on the individual. I don't think Grosvenor is a company where discrimination would be a real issue but I suppose if you have an individual who is that way inclined when interviewing then I suppose it might be a possibility.

**L:** Was promotion available to cleaning operatives when you were with the company?

**M:** Yeah. I suppose to be fair to Grosvenor a lot of the people who are there now, especially in the client service manager level, would have basically been experienced cleaners who

have worked their way up. There was always the opportunity of promotion there but then again I suppose it depends on the individual. There might be someone who just wants to come in do their hours and go home.

**L:** We touched on this area earlier, but when you were with Grosvenor did you think there were any areas of the recruitment process that needed to be highlighted?

**S:** Well myself and the operations manager looked at a lot of it so obviously we considered who is doing the recruiting, what skills have they got, do they know what documentation to check, do they know the legislation, do they know how to treat people, etc. So a lot of it, to be fair, was looked at. Now, because of the amount of staff and the complexity of needing someone now and then, that is the biggest issue. So I think it is all about the training of the recruiters constantly, basically.

**L:** Was there any formal training provided?

**S:** Well we did some in house training. Well I did it myself with the HR administrator and I think some of them did go on an IBEC course or something as well; like an introduction into recruitment in HR and that sort of thing.

**L:** In general, while you were with Grosvenor, did you think the recruitment process was effective?

**S:** It was effective but there were definitely issues there. There was definitely room for improvement. It's about putting those policies and procedures in place but you have to remember that sometimes it is not always realistic if you are trying to get someone in. Daft little things like if you are trying to get contracts back, you could solve it by saying if the contract doesn't come back the person doesn't get paid then you have a better chance of getting it back quicker and that.

**L:** So it would be those little things like paperwork that would be the main issues?

**S:** Yeah the main issues would really be paperwork not returned properly, visa's and passports not photocopied properly or not signed to say that it is the correct person, that kind of thing.

**L:** Do you think, given the nature of the industry, it is not practical to go through all the 'proper' stages of recruitment because there are time restraints etc.?

**S:** It depends really on the type of contract. It will be different if they have a days' notice to fill the position or six weeks' notice. Then you have the issue of transfer of undertakings and getting people signed back up to the terms and making sure they have the training from the other company etc.

The following interview took place between the researcher (L) and a district operations manager (B)

**L:** How are you involved in the recruitment of cleaning operatives?

**B:** Ok. So the first thing we would do is, if we get CV's from the HR administrator or word of mouth, we would make the phone calls, we would arrange to meet these people and generally what I would do is ask 'o have you done cleaning before' you know the things that would be beneficial to a cleaning company. And then, they would either say yes or no, but it makes no difference if they do or they don't because I like to train them when they are starting off. If you get someone who is 40 years of age who has worked for several different companies they do pick up bad habits and it is hard to break those habits. I would prefer to have someone that has never cleaned before and then start from A-Z you know, exactly the way. We would have procedures here because I am a certified trainer.

**L:** What happens in the recruitment process?

**B:** When the application forms are filled in, if they are non-nationals I will always ask them what their status in this country is; we normally prefer 2 and 4 and then we will give them the application forms to fill in before we start them on the site. We will go through everything that is on the application form. I will always check their visa, always. If they can't produce a current visa or if their visa is expiring in a week's time I personally will try and get someone to cover that site until this person can produce an updated one. That is the way I do it anyway, and always if we have any doubts at all I would ring HR.

**L:** And what is the selection process?

**B:** I will interview them myself. And a lot of the time the CSM's will have a team of ladies who are not interested in doing something permanent but they are willing to do some cover work and then if you have someone on leave that you can ring one of them to see if they are available to cover it.

**L:** So it would be an informal approach you would take to recruitment; more word of mouth that sort of way?



**B:** Yeah for short term cover. If we are trying to fill a permanent approach what I will do is go to HR who have a list of people who have forwarded CV's and again I can only speak to myself, but HR will forward the CV's on to me and when I get them I save them. I will then go through them and ring the people. Now some of them will say that they sent it in ages ago and already have a job. Now those CV's will be sent on to everybody.

**L:** Would you screen the CV's or would you just put them in if there is a job going for them?

**B:** Em, experience. I am over 30 years doing this you nearly know by sitting down and speaking to someone, you know, like their body language. We nearly know when we are speaking to somebody if they can or can't, if they are suitable or not, and we always have the back up of having the probationary period. If you have them for 6 months on probation you will know within the first 2 weeks if they are suitable or not.

**L:** Do you think the recruitment process is appropriate, or do you think there is anywhere it could be improved?

**B:** I know the application forms that we have now, it doesn't have on it previous employers, the ones we are actually using now. The old ones did, well I know you give that in with the CV anyway but at least if you knew who these people worked for you wouldn't, well I personally wouldn't engage anyone until I at least done a reference check. It is only a matter of a phone call. In our previous company I always done that and in our findings our HR people would over a period of a couple of months redo what we had done. But what we have here is actually working. You might get one in a thousand that may escape you but it is very seldom we are all really experienced and we have the structure that is in place now is working. You can always move forward as new things come in and adapt to the system.

**L:** Have any issues ever arisen for you with this recruitment process?

**B:** the only problem is you would engage somebody and you might be on site Monday morning ready to start them and they don't arrive. That would be the only issue I have ever encountered but they are few and far between.

**L:** When you are recruiting what would you have to take into consideration?

**B:** Well it depends. We may have some particular duties, maybe a janitor's duty and it wouldn't be done on a sexist thing it might be done on the case of heavy lifting and you might say look I can't have a lady for this a male operative would be much better suited. Now that would not be sexist in any way. And that would be the only time I would ever differentiate.

**L:** How long typically do you have to fill a position?

**B:** Well if they follow procedures that we ask them to follow, we normally ask people to provide two weeks' notice in writing. There are cases where we don't get that and there are times when we are expecting people to be on site and the customer might ring you to say no one showed up; nobody would have been told the person wasn't going to show and when you ring them they might just say 'o I've decided I'm not going back'. Then you are left an operative down and you have to try and get someone in as quickly as possible. So we will try and fill that position with a person that is willing to cover; they will be offered the position if they don't want it they will cover until we can fill it with a permanent body.

**L:** Would it be common to ask other staff members if they know of anybody looking for a job; word of mouth methods?

**B:** In the cleaning industry a lot is word of mouth because I'm not going to recommend someone unless I know they won't let me down or reflect badly on me; not that they would anyway because they are themselves and have nothing to do with me. It shouldn't reflect on the person but they might feel that it will. Normally when people recommend someone we ask them to get them to send in their CV.

**L:** And would it be common then for that person to be hired?

**B:** It could do. I like to try and place people in an area where they live. You know then the chance of them being late is slim as opposed to sending someone across Dublin to a site. It reflects well on them also because I find that they'll be tired and unable to do the job as well.

**L:** If you got a recommendation through word of mouth would you bother recruiting externally?

**B:** We wouldn't normally unless we have to.

**L:** For you are there any legal considerations when you are recruiting?

**B:** Well the only thing is every cleaner is covered by the JLC and the cleaner has that which shows the

**L:** Are you aware of the 9 ground of discrimination governed under the Equality Act?

**B:** O the age, race and all that. We would never discriminate here.

**L:** Do you go through any training with regards to recruitment and selection?

**B:** No but that is one thing that we were asked when I took over my current position now. HR did send around a little survey and that was one of the things that I did say that I would actually like, more training. Because in my previous job they would have in house sessions every 6 months and it was kind of like a refresher course.

**L:** So you think it would be beneficial?

**B:** To every one of us because each and every one of us, you can't remember everything all the time. Things are changing so rapidly and what we might have known to be fact last year has changed. HR is very good they do make us aware of changes.

