

The Impact of Video Realistic Job Previews on Applicants' Perceptions of Sport Jobs

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Organizations use numerous recruitment tactics in order to attract the best individuals for vacant job positions. These tactics take many forms, including print ads, website portals, job fairs, and visits to college campuses. Because of the cost involved with recruitment, organizations have an incentive to ensure they attract and hire the best available candidates who have realistic expectations about the work. But sometimes, recruits have unmet expectations of the actual work and thus, are less attracted to the company and are less likely to accept a job offer (Barber & Roehling, 1993; Maurer, Howe, & Lee, 1992). Also, if these individuals are actually hired, these unmet expectations can lead to employee dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, and a loss of financial resources for the respective organization (Hom, Griffeth, Palich, & Bracker, 1998; Wanous, 1973). One way to minimize these unfavorable outcomes is through the use of a Realistic Job Preview (RJP); this is the presentation of both favorable and unfavorable job-related information to job applicants (Rynes, 1991). RJPs are designed to prevent newcomer dissatisfaction and function similarly to a vaccination in that they give job candidates a small dose of "organizational reality" (Popovich & Wanous, 1982).

RJPs have taken the forms of videos (Meglino, 1993; Reilly & Brown, 1981), written descriptions (Thorsteinson, 2004), site visits (Reilly & Brown, 1981), verbal presentations (Dugoni, 1981), and simulations (Lent, 2007) and are delivered at various times in the recruitment process. In general, scholars have noted that RJPs are related to lower attrition from the recruitment process, better initial expectations of new employees, improved job performance and satisfaction, and lower turnover intentions (Dilla, 1987; Hom et al., 1998; Phillips, 1998).

Because job seekers in sport often use somewhat distinct heuristics when considering satisfactory job openings (Andrew et al., 2006; Todd & Andrew, 2006; Todd & Andrew, 2008; Todd & Kent, 2009), in this current study, we were particularly interested in how a RJP influenced a sample of job applicants in Sport Management. More precisely, we sought to understand whether or not applicants' attraction levels to jobs, acceptance intentions, and perceived person-job fit would be impacted by a video presentation of a RJP.

With this underlying purpose in mind, the study was set up in the following manner. First, two students fulfilling internships for course credit each separately developed a 25 minute video of a Game Day Operations job in college athletics. Students were asked to develop a video that would essentially be a realistic preview of the actual work he/she was doing. The video shows the intern completing typical, day-to-day set up and break down of athletic events. Two videos were used to control for the effects of a single producer and the videos were not completed as part of the same academic term (i.e., the students were not working in that job at the same time and did not know each other).

Next, three graduate research assistants independently coded the videos and produced a written job description. These three job descriptions were combined to properly align the material in the video with the job description. We then developed a survey instrument consisting of two Job Acceptance Items (Harris & Fink, 1987) scored on a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from “Definitely Not” to “Definitely”, four Person Job Fit items (Saks & Ashforth, 1997) scored on a 4 point Likert-type scale ranging from “Not at all” to “Very Much”, and three Applicant Attraction items adapted from Rau and Hyland (2002) and scored on a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”

The study procedures were as follows. To start, each group of students was given a packet that contained the written job description. They were asked to read it carefully, and then complete the survey items representing the three dependent variables. The survey administrator then played the RJP [video] for the class for at least 25 minutes and the dependent variables were collected again using a survey instrument. Overall, there were three separate groups in this study from a total of two Universities. Group 1 was at University A and watched Video A. Groups 2 and 3 were from University B and watched Video B. The dependent variables were collected on the same day for Group 1 and Group 2, but there was a delay of four days for Group 3.

A significant change occurred in all three dependent variables after the video was presented to the participants. In particular, the means for all three dependent variables decreased from time 1 to time 2. Acceptance Intentions time 1 mean dropped from 3.65 to 2.84 ($t = 7.53$), PJ Fit time 1 mean dropped from 2.8 to 1.69 ($t = 6.9$) and time 1 Applicant Attraction dropped from 3.16 to 2.16 ($t = 9.19$). However, not every participant was negatively impacted by the video. Indeed, for some, the video made them more attracted to the job and/or they perceived the job to be a better fit. Generally, those students who were less knowledgeable about Sport Management (i.e., in lower level classes) reported the greatest changes in Acceptance Intentions, PJ Fit, and Applicant Attraction after the watching the video compared to students who were more advanced in their Sport Management curriculum.

Implications of the study will be directed at practitioners in the sport industry who screen applicants for jobs (e.g., human resources personnel). It is possible that a video RJP would pre-screen the applicant pool and assist with what is an already arduous process. Implications will also be directed at theory to explain why certain students viewed the video positively and others perceived it negatively (as far as it pertained to their career interests). Future research ideas concerning RJP and sport organizations will be presented as well.