The Main Role of Human Resources (HR)

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Abstract: In simplest terms, the HR (Human Resources) department is a group who is responsible for managing the employee life cycle (i.e., recruiting, hiring, onboarding, training, and firing employees) and administering employee benefits.

Keywords: HR, employee, organization, management, team.

Introduction. Ask any employee what an HR department is, and you'll get an answer that primarily deals with the most uncomfortable aspects of work: HR violations, layoffs, and firing. But the truth is that human resources is there to support employees. It's quite literally a resource for humans.

Here are some of the tasks your HR department is busy completing every day.

1. Recruit candidates

HR needs to understand the organization's needs and make sure those needs are met when recruiting for new positions. It's not as simple as just throwing an ad up on Indeed: you'll need to analyze the market, consult stakeholders, and manage budgets.

Then, once the role is advertised, more research needs to be done to make sure that the right candidates are being attracted and presented. Recruiting is a massive—and costly—undertaking; the right candidate can revitalize an entire organization, but the wrong candidate can upend operations.

2. Hire the right employees

Human resources is in charge of arranging interviews, coordinating hiring efforts, and onboarding new employees. They're also in charge of making sure all paperwork involved with hiring someone is filled out and making sure that everything from the first day to each subsequent day is navigated successfully.

3. Process payroll

Payroll is its own beast. Every payday must have taxes calculated and hours collected. Expenses need to be reimbursed and raises and bonuses need to be added in as well. If you think it's a chore doing taxes just once a year, imagine what it must be like to be in HR and make sure they're properly deducted every pay period.

4. Conduct disciplinary actions

This responsibility may be why HR tends to get a bad rap. When navigated inappropriately, disciplinary actions can lead to the loss of a valuable employee and can even result in litigation or a poor reputation. But when handled appropriately, disciplinary action can result in the success of an employee.

For instance, if a company notices that a particular employee is routinely late and continues being late even after the employee has received several warnings, HR could step in and investigate the reason for the tardiness. It may be an opportunity to extend benefits such as counseling to the employee or offer additional resources to help the employee learn to be on time. Instead of taking on the cost of firing and then recruiting a replacement for that employee, it could be a learning opportunity that could enhance that employee's career.

On the other hand, sometimes disciplinary action isn't the best course to take and an employee

should be let go. The best human resources departments know when an employee isn't the right fit for a company and would be happier somewhere else. It's up to HR to develop a strong enough relationship with managers and employees alike to identify the cohesiveness and health of a team.

5. Update policies

Policies need to be updated (or at least examined) every year as the organization changes. It's HR's job to make official updates to policies and to suggest changes to policies when they no longer serve the company or the employees. Sometimes a policy should be updated as a reaction to an occurrence. HR should always be included in and consulted with regarding these decisions.

6. Maintain employee records

Maintaining HR records is mandated by law. These records help employers identify skill gaps to help with the hiring process and to analyze demographic data and comply with regulations. They also contain personal details and emergency contacts for each employee.

7. Conduct benefit analysis

Staying competitive is of prime importance when trying to attract the best talent. A promising recruit may choose a different company with lesser pay if the benefits are more attractive. HR should routinely investigate similar companies to see if their benefits are competitve.

An HR department that never interacts with employees isn't doing its job. While you're developing an onboarding procedure, educate new employees on when to reach out to HR and what resources HR has to offer. The HR department should regularly schedule one-on-one interviews with employees to check in on their career progression, comfort in their roles, and any other issues the employee may be having.

Considering these responsibilities, employees should feel comfortable reaching out to their HR departments in these, and similar, situations:

- When you (or a co-worker) experience harassment or discrimination from your colleagues, including your manager

- When you have questions about benefits, including company-provided health insurance or rights guaranteed by law

- When your personal circumstances change (e.g. having a child, needing to reduce your hours, needing accommodation for a disability)

- When you have questions about advancing at the company, including opportunities to shadow other employees or participate in additional training

- When you need an objective third-party to work through a work-related issue

Recruitment and Hiring is perhaps the most popular role associated with human resource managers. It involves finding, reviewing credentials, screening, and selecting candidates for a company. An effective recruitment process results in the hiring of employees who are tailor-fit for the position and not just candidates who have the best credentials. HRM is responsible for identifying workforce needs, sourcing potential candidates, conducting interviews, and selecting the right individuals to fill vacant positions. This role involves ensuring a match between the skills and qualifications of candidates and the requirements of the job.

Popular Recruitment Methods

An HR manager can employ a variety of recruitment methods to cast a broader net to lure potential candidates. These methods include:

✓ Employee referrals

- ✓ Advertising on social networking sites (LinkedIn, Facebook)
- ✓ Dedicated online job portal
- ✓ Participate in job fairs (community, organizations, universities, colleges)
- ✓ Post job openings on online job boards
- ✓ Advertising in print media (newspapers, magazines)
- ✓ Working with or outsourcing recruitment services to a dedicated recruitment company

HRM is involved in identifying training needs, designing and delivering training programs, and supporting continuous development initiatives. This role aims to ensure that employees have the necessary skills and competencies to perform their roles effectively and contribute to organizational success. Even with the most experienced candidate, joining a new company requires training. The purpose of employee training is to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their role effectively. Employers must be prepared to commit a significant amount of investment in their employee's training. This is not only beneficial for the company but also helps in the employee's self-development. The quality of training provided goes a long way in retaining employees. When employees feel that they can grow, they are more likely to stay in their jobs. The opportunity for employees to enhance their skills improves overall satisfaction and morale.

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