

# Job workforce shifts

[Business](#), [Work](#)



From 1900 to 1999 the United States has witnessed a major workforce shift that is still evolving today and Human Resource Managers are playing even a bigger role within companies today. With the competitive market environment today, Human Resource Managers need to keep evolving with and roll with the many changes within the workforce. Company's big or small better realize that they are playing a more strategic role in the success of their organization. Local and globally company's Human Resource departments must become adaptable, agile, employee focused and resilient to remain competitive within our economy today.

Not only are these professionals a huge part of a company's success, they are an employee's partner, sponsor, and their mentor embedded within your organization. There is no doubt that America's workforce is in a much situation and better off in 1999 versus 1900. From the beginning of 1900, the American workforce witnesses an incredible period where they saw their wages beginning to raise, personnel benefits grow, and working conditions improved. When the workforce is compared from the beginning to today you can see the numerous changes. For example, in the last 100 years, America's workforce has increased approximately six fold.

In the 1900 the workforce was estimated at roughly 24 million that also included kids at the age of 10 and above gainfully employed. Now fast forward to 1999, the workforce was estimated at 139 million with the ages of 16 and older gainfully employed. Not only are these numbers impressive but workplace, compensation, composition, and the very nature of work changed in those past 100 years. During the shift, the composition of America's labor force changed from an industrial dominated production occupations, like

foresters, farmers, to those dominated by technical, service, and professional workers.

A great example would be our farmers, at the turn of the century 38 percent of America's labor force where farmers compared to the end of the century where there were barely 3 percent of our labor force where farmers. Our worked shift in other ways too, like the female workforce saw a huge spike from just 19 percent in 1900, to 60 percent by 1999. No more of the wife staying home raising the kids and running the home while their husband worked. Women now have entered the labor workforce in great numbers. During the great depression many families needed income in order to survive and child labor was very common during the turn of the century.

In 1900 there were estimated 1.75 million kids within the labor force ranging from the age of 10 to 15. Child labor at this time represented about 6 percent of the labor force. In contrast, by 1999, our Federal and State law regulated child labor and Federal laws today prohibit full time workers under the age of 16. By the end of the 20th century, additional wages and benefits comprised a major portion of an employee compensation package. In 1900 benefits were very minimal at best, during the course of the 20th century, working conditions, wages, and benefits have kept trending to the more positive side.

Another major shift in the workforce in the past 100 years dealt with the demographics of the population. Not only has the life expectancy changed from 47 years in 1900 to 77 years by 1999, but the population has aged, they are more diverse, and grew dramatically. The population at the

beginning of the 20th century was estimated at 76 million to 280 million by 1999. Because of these numerous workforce shifts, today these shifts can be felt by human resource managers today. Human Resource Managers today must be business driven and play a big part within their company's big or small.

They must understand their company's vision and mission statement to be able to influence major decisions and policies. The workplace now is so diversity the human resource manager must be able to manage the body of talent that will bring new innovative ideas, perspectives, and views to their work. Today human resource professionals must learn how to manage effectively through planning, controlling, leading, and organizing the human resource while being flexible and willingly to adapt for the good of the organization or company they represent.