

# Role and functions of hr managers

[Business](#), [Management](#)



## **Introduction**

The Human Resource Department deals with management of people within the organisation. There are a number of responsibilities that come with this title. First of all, the Department is responsible for hiring members of staff; this will involve attracting employees, keeping them in their positions and ensuring that they perform to expectation. Besides, the Human Resource Department also clarifies and sets day to day goals for the organisation. It is responsible for organisation of people in the entire Company and plans for future ventures and objectives involving people in the Company. Handy, (1999) Research has shown that the human aspect of resources within an organisation contributes approximately eighty percent of the organisation's value. This implies that if people are not managed properly, the organisation faces a serious chance of falling apart. The Human Resource Department's main objective is to bring out the best in their employees and thus contribute to the success of the Company. These roles come with certain positive and negative aspects. However, the negative aspects can be minimised by improvements to their roles and functions.

These issues shall be examined in detail in the subsequent sections of the essay with reference to case examples of businesses in current operation.

**Positive aspects of Roles and Functions of the Human Resource Department**

**Recruitment of Employees** This is one of the most fundamental roles of the HR department. This is because this function ensures that the Company under consideration selects the most skilful and competent person from a

sea of applicants at that time. This function involves evaluation of ability and competency of potential employees in relation to what the Company needs.

This role falls under the Staffing role of management. If this function is performed well, then the organisation will increase value consequently being on the right pathway to achieve its organisational and departmental goals and objectives. (Hyde, 2004) Effective recruitment can be done through a number of ways. First of all the Company can conduct educational and psychological measurements. This task will involve assessment of abilities, skills and character evaluation of applicants. Through psychometric evaluation, the Company can ensure that employees have the right attitude necessary to fit into the organisation.

Another method Companies use to recruit members of staff is through interviews. Here, the Human Resource Department can ask applicants questions that evaluate their decision making abilities and how they would deal with certain situations if presented with them. The Department can also employ the use of written interviews where applicants answer questions addressing key issues in the organisation. Through these channels, the Department contributes towards organisational performance. An example of a Company that performs this role well is Tesco Ireland.

The Company notifies the public about vacancies. It then posts a questionnaire online and interested parties fill it at that time. This is then evaluated and those who fall within their minimum requirements are invited for an interview. In the interview, applicants are asked a number of questions and those who did extremely well are further analysed and retained. Those

who did moderately well are not immediately eliminated; instead, their interview questions are kept on file then these are reviewed after six months.

By so doing, the Tesco Ireland makes sure that its employees are highly capable and that they will enrich the organisation. (Hyde, 2004)

**Improvement of Compensation Packages** One of the major functions of the HR department is to motivate employees. This can be done through rewards especially for those who have done well. The HR department needs to evaluate performance of employees and those who have exceeded expectations should be compensated for their actions. Research has shown that rewarding employees for good performance is the number one incentive for keeping up this trend.

These compensation packages can come in the following ways;

- Holiday Offers
- End of Year Bonuses
- Equities
- Awards
- Salary Increments
- Provision of Flexible Working Hours
- Straight forward

## **Promotion Schemes and Career Developments**

If the HR department includes these incentives, then it will ensure that employees are satisfied with the Company. It will also contribute towards

good staff retention rates. This is especially crucial in increasing stability within the organisation. It also makes employees identify with the firm and instils a sense of loyalty. Handy, 1999) Planning in the Organisation The Human Resource Department is placed with the responsibility of ensuring that it plans adequately for all the organisation's future engagements that will involve people. One important aspect of this is planning for employees in the organisation. It is important that the organisation ensures that all the employees under its wing are just enough to increase value to the organisation. The Department must ensure that staff members are not too many because if they exceed this amount, then the organisation stands to lose.

It must plan adequately to ensure that staff members are not too few either, otherwise they will be overworking those who are already in place.

Consequently, there will be poor motivation resulting from fatigue. The HR department is also bestowed with the responsibility of planning future organisational goals in relation to people or clarifying these same goals to staff members. This function of the department ensures that people in the organisation have a general direction which they are working towards.

Organisations that have a clear direction are always more effective; those members of staff will be more result oriented rather than just working for the sake of it. The Department is also responsible for setting day to day objectives necessary for streamlining activities within the organisation and thus ensuring that work is not just done haphazardly. (Hyde, 2004)

## **Negative Aspects of Functions and Roles of the Human Resource Department**

There are a number of problems that arise as the department goes about its activities. Problems in Recruitment. The department may sometimes be unable to adequately coordinate and incorporate all the employees needed in the Company's operations. One such example is the NHS. In the year 2004, the organisation was found to be wanting in its human resource department's functions. The Company was recruiting a large proportion of its employees; 40% from Asian and African countries. This means that the organisation was draining medical personnel from those needy countries and using them for themselves. (Katherine, 2002) Such a practice showed that the HR department had exercised bad judgement in its staffing function. Instead, it could have used these foreign nurses as temporary measure and put in place a strategy to train local nurses such that it could stop depending on those poor countries for supply of nurses. Problems in Remuneration In the process of trying to motivate members of staff to perform better, the Human Resource may make deals that eventually cause problems. A case in point is the Home Depot. This Company has an employee Compensation policy that requires that one should be rewarded for the time they have served the Company.

The Home Depot Company offers an end of year bonus, basic salary and grant on stock shares as an incentive for some of its employees. The CEO of the Company Robert Nardelli lost his job in the year 2007. This was because the company has experienced a lot of losses under his leadership; its shares fell by eight percent in the stock exchange and he deserved to leave the

Company. However, because the Human Resource Department had put in place a policy that requires all members of staff to be given the incentive mentioned above, he left with a lot of money. It was reported that he had with him about two hundred and ten million dollars.

The Company had no way out of this payment because HR had already passed that policy and they were bound by the law. This goes to show that sometimes policies made by the HR department do not benefit the Company especially if the parties involved are considered as losses to the Company. (Michael, 2007) Problems in Planning Sometimes the HR Department can employ people who may not contribute towards organisational principles. A classic example is the Arthur Andersen Company that fell apart in the year 2002. This was an American Company that dealt with audits.

It was initially very successful in its operations prior to that fateful year. But in the latter years of its operations, the Company was involved in two accounting scandals that tarnished its name and subsequently caused failure. The Company failed to plan well for the kind of employees it recruited. This was witnessed when one of its employees in the Legal Department called Nancy Temple was fined in the Court of law for non adherence to accounting laws. This problem could have been prevented if the HR department had evaluated this employee before hiring her and also evaluation should have been done during her performance.

If HR had been extremely critical, then they would have realised that the employee did not adhere to Company principles and would therefore have terminated her employment. Beside this, the Arthur Andersen Human

Resource department also failed in its communication function to employees. The department should have ensured that they constantly communicate to members of staff about the goals and objectives of the Company on a day to day basis. This would have made them very clear in the minds of employees and would have prevented the downfall of the Company.

### **Strategies to Improve Human Resource Department's Value to the Organisation Training and Internships**

It is not necessarily a guarantee that a candidate who did well in the recruitment exercise is the best in performing an organisation's functions. New employees need orientation into the Company's functions and can also improve some inefficiency that these new employees may have in relation to their skills. This is the purpose of placing them on internships. (Norbert, 1967) Training is also essential for members of staff who have been working for the organisation for a long time. This is especially so in the wake of technological advancements, legal changes and changes in service delivery. It is important for an Organisation to keep up with industry trends otherwise it faces the danger of becoming obsolete; especially in the background of increasing competition. Training need not be restricted to improvement of skills; it can also involve improvement of attitudes. This is normally characterised by attendance of workshops and other forms of talks. Training also increases motivation of employees and gives them that extra boost of energy needed to get them through tough times in their jobs.

All the above tasks are placed under the Department of Human Resource because it is the one that will assess when training is needed, who needs the training, where and by whom. This aspect is a sure to improve value of the



HR Department in the organisation. An example of a company that adheres to this principle is Marks and Spencer retail chain outlet. The Company offers training for twelve months. Here new employees are taught all that is necessary to meet organisational goals and objectives then they can start work when they are ready to do so. (Norbert, 1967)

### **Making Better Use of Time**

The Human Resource is conferred with the responsibility of ensuring that all members of staff perform to their best ability. It could improve this area by facilitating better use of time in all departments within the organisation. Time is one of the most crucial yet intangible assets of the Company. The proper use of this resource could maximise production and achievement of organisational goals. (Harold, 2003) The Department can do this by planning activities to be carried out in the organisation. It can make schedules for the various activities that have to be done in the organisation and thus facilitate better flow of information. In addition to this, the Company can also ensure that all members of staff are held accountable for not performing a certain task. This is especially in regard to maintenance of the schedules. In so doing, human the Human Resource Department will be ensuring that employees do not simply report to work and that the time spent at work is directly proportional to output.

### **Improving Organisational Culture**

The Human Resource Department can try to improve organisational culture through a three step procedure. The first step of the process is observation. In this step HR finds out what makes up or what the

company's culture is like. HR should also be very intense on the organisational needs. Here, HR should realise that personal fulfilment works better and therefore should try to ensure that the change is relevant to every staff member. In this stage, HR should try to explain to all staff members or stakeholder the advantage of transforming the culture in the organisation. This should be made clear so that all can see the advantages at the individual level and not simply at the organizational level. Erica, 2006)

Then HR should try to eliminate all inhibitions in staff member's minds. It is possible that some may claim that they tried one or two strategies before and it did not succeed. This are what are called ' cries of despair' and HR should try its best to explain to staff members the need of changing the culture of the organisation. The next step is the analysis of various aspects. Here, there is collection of data needed in making certain that culture changes. This stage involves checking out the success features or the factors that can facilitate its success. There should be calibration of data collected.

Staff members should be made to understand that there are no perfect situations for implementation of changes. The analysis should involve assessing whether the information is sensible or not. Whether data gathered will be helpful or not and if it is too little or too much. Staff members should be requested for data that will help change the culture. Of course when trying to bring in change HR Department should have perceived benefits, a deadline for execution and also the realised gains in relation to the change in culture. In this step, there should be reality checks which should be done often.

There should also be continuous integration. Through this scheme HR Department should be able to change the culture in the organisation and add value to it. (Harold, 2003)

## **Conclusion**

The Human Resource Management team's main function is to manage people. There are positive and negative aspects of this function; first of all, the HR department enriches the organisation through recruitment procedures and an example an effective HR team in this area is Tesco Ireland. HR department also ensures that members of staff follow a general direction by frequently clarifying and reminding them of the organisation's goals. Besides this, they are also responsible for organising incentives or compensation packages to motivate employees. All these functions contribute towards organisational effectiveness. However, there are some negative aspects of HR; it has to bear the burden of blame if an employee performs poorly like the Arthur Andersen Company. Besides this, some policies made by the department may be detrimental to the Company like in the Home Depot Company's case. Improvements to their role can be done by arranging training for staff members, organising activities for the organisation and changing organisational culture. (Erica, 2006)