

It areas of  
responsibility and  
asked respondents



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It is vital to recognize the significance of HR and its part in defining the performance result of business. As for now, there have been several studies to calculate the influence which the whole HRM structure has on company's performance. By doing so, consideration must be made to human resource inputs, processes (practices) and outputs, leading to sustained competitive advantage (Lado & Wilson, 1994). A model of the human resource management system was developed by Ferguson (2006), based on Barney's (1991) resource-based view of the firm.

Line managers have taken increasing responsibility for the delivery of HR practices over the last few decades and now play a critical role in people management in most organizations, but not in TB, which is a great mistake. Significantly, the way line managers implement these practices can influence employee attitudes and behavior. Line managers are therefore the important link between employee experiences of HRM and the formation of their attitudes towards their job and the organization. Line managers have appropriately been called 'HR agents' of the organization because they mediate between individuals and HR practices (Truss, 2001). Research from Crail (2004) makes it clear that first-line managers are increasingly expected to have the solution to everything, from absence management to 14 Managing People and Organizations productivity. The research listed 23 areas of responsibility and asked respondents whether these were the responsibility of first-line managers alone, a shared responsibility, or not their responsibility at all. Only a handful of the 62 employers contacted said that the following had nothing to do with line managers: v absence managementv appraisalsv grievance v health and safety v

planning/allocating work v recruitment v staff deployment v team briefing v team development v ongoing training v welfare. This trend looks set to continue, many respondents expecting line managers to become more autonomous and take on more responsibility, especially for people management.

The importance of line managers in the delivery of HRM, however, is far greater than a quantitative survey can reveal. The work of Appelbaum et al (2000) and Purcell et al (2003) emphasises that the likelihood of employees' engaging in discretionary effort is influenced by the role of line managers. For example, (Appelbaum et al, 2000: 235): plant managers who invest in the skills of front-line managers and include these workers in decision-making activities elicit discretionary effort by employees.

This effort increases operational efficiency and competitive advantage. This is an important conclusion. It suggests that there is a direct link between line management training and the willingness to work beyond contract and 'go the extra mile' on the part of employees.