**Human Resource Management**

**QUIZ: What are Human Resources?**

Human resources (HR) is a department in a workplace that focuses on a company's most important asset its employees to ensure they're satisfied, engaged and have all the resources they require to perform as expected. HR is the department responsible for maintaining a company's personnel, employee relations and workplace culture. This team manages recruiting, hiring, firing, training, skills development, policy implementation, benefits, payroll, government regulation, legal compliance and safety and often moderates and helps resolve conflicts and concerns between employees.

HR professionals help give a company structure and order and foster productivity and organizational success. HR personnel partner with management to address personnel concerns and provide support and resources where needed so that managers can focus on running their department operations. Choosing a career in human resources can be a rewarding experience both personally and professionally.

**Key functions of human resources**

A company's HR department serves many purposes and roles. Whether you're interested in pursuing a role in human resources or you're curious how HR may affect your job search and employment experience, ensure to understand what HR does. Here are some of the key functions they oversee:

**Recruitment and staffing**

Human resources departments have a significant role in determining a company's staffing needs, recruiting new employees and hiring well-qualified candidates. This responsibility includes critical tasks such as identifying qualifications and requirements for each position, writing job descriptions and placing job postings, evaluating resumes, conducting interviews, completing background checks and working with department managers to select ideal candidates. The recruiting and hiring process is important because hiring the right people may increase operational efficiency, improve business outcomes and decrease turnover rates.

**New hire onboarding**

After hiring employees, the human resources department guides new team members through their first days or weeks at the company. This process introduces new team members to the workplace culture and provides access to company resources that may help the employee navigate their employment journey and settle into their new role.

The HR staff is also responsible for developing and executing an onboarding plan to help new hires integrate into the workforce seamlessly and provides them with the information and tools they require to succeed in their roles. This guidance helps employees acclimate to their new position and workplace quickly and easily which benefits both the employees and the organization.

**Training and development**

Whether an employee is a new hire or a long-time contributor to the company, they need ongoing skill-building and career development opportunities to continue being productive and successful to meet personal and professional goals.

It's the HR department's responsibility to plan and oversee the training needs of employees. Career development courses and training may include education on new technology, employee relations or leadership training for current or prospective supervisors.

Training can be one-on-one, through group meetings or via online courses and self-education. Human resources might also recommend or support employees' professional development by helping them earn a certain higher education degree by developing a tuition assistance or reimbursement program.

**Compensation and benefits**

HR works with executive leadership to establish the organization's compensation philosophy. HR professionals often conduct market research to determine competitive pay rates and develop a compensation structure.

They also work with insurance brokers to select health and welfare benefits such as medical, dental, vision, life insurance for employees. HR also oversees benefits administration including enrollment and processing.

**Employee well-being**

The human resource department helps support and improve employees' work-life quality and the company culture. They create and oversee programs such as day care, health and wellness initiatives, paid time off and other efforts to keep employees happy and motivated.

The HR department also gauges employee satisfaction through focus groups, opinion surveys and regular feedback and uses this input to improve the workplace. A well-run company shows concern for and cares about each of its employees. The human resources department helps foster this supportive work environment which helps reduce employee turnover and enhance performance.

**Performance reviews and promotions**

The human resources department facilitates annual or semi-annual performance evaluations for all employees. A performance review process allows managers to check in with employees one-on-one to discuss performance, define performance criteria and measurements, set expectations and goals which align with business objectives and drive employee development while promoting fairness and transparency.

Based on performance, experience and seniority, an employee's manager and human resources might decide to promote an employee or present them with a salary increase. Generally, HR works with senior leadership to set company rules and expectations for promotions and reward top employees for their dedication and commitment to improvements.

**Record keeping**

Because human resources employees are responsible for the entire employee database, the department organizes and oversees confidential information such as contracts, wages, job responsibilities, disciplinary measures and performance reviews. Human resources staff are often extremely well-organized, meticulous, discreet and professional, keeping information easily accessible at all times.

**Legal compliance**

The human resources department makes sure its organization adheres to labor, union and federal and state laws. This helps keep businesses compliant with regulations like fair employment, workplace safety and much more.

This responsibility is important because employee complaints of noncompliance or unfair or unsafe work conditions can affect workplace morale, productivity and profits. The HR staff also ensures employees can legally work for their company and handles complaints pertaining to discrimination and harassment.

**Corporate image**

By educating employees about company values and policies, the human resources department helps protect the company's corporate image and reputation. An effective HR team can also bolster a company's reputation as a top employer to work for which can help attract top talent. It can also help mitigate and avoid possible conflicts and situations that may reduce the image of their employer.

**Workplace safety**

Human resources departments oversee workplace safety training and record employee injuries or illnesses that occur on the job, as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA). This act requires companies to provide safe and clean work conditions for staff and human resources personnel are also well-versed in this legislation. Often, human resources set workplace policies and put together safety training materials. They often manage employee compensation for safety issues or injuries.

**What is a human resources department?**

A human resources department can be a single generalist, an entire team of specialists or an outsourced service, depending on the company's needs. In most cases, full human resources departments are a necessity in larger companies with many employees and complex needs. A smaller company that doesn't need or can't afford a fully staffed, in-house human resources department might employ one generalist or outsource its HR responsibilities to a third-party service.

**Types of human resources support**

Here are the types of human resources support that companies might partner with:

**In-house human resources department**

With an in-house department, human resources professionals are on-site and intimately familiar with every aspect of a company's policies and employee relations. Staff can meet with employees in person at any time which helps resolve conflicts and ensures paperwork processes quickly and efficiently.

In-house HR staff also tend to have a more personal connection with employees and their success. Employees typically feel comfortable approaching a trusted and unbiased in-house HR professional to discuss or settle issues or disputes at work, or talk about benefits and compensation.

**Professional employer organizations (PEO)**

Smaller companies may choose to partner with a professional employer organization (PEO) to manage HR needs. A PEO essentially employs the company's workforce, taking legal responsibility for them and overseeing all hiring, firing and compensation processes.

When smaller and even mid-size companies lack the budget or resources for an in-house HR department or manager, outsourcing those functions to PEOs or e-services might make the most sense. Human resources jobs within those organizations vary but require similar skill sets and a desire to improve people's work lives.

**Business process outsourcing (BPO)**

By HR definition, a BPO takes care of many company needs, including but not limited to human resources. This type of organization relies heavily on technology to streamline company processes and departments. Companies that provide these services often provide them to many businesses at the same time.

**Application service providers (ASPs)**

An ASP is an e-service that vendors rent to companies to manage critical HR needs such as benefits, policies, compensation, record-keeping and more. Employees and leadership can access the web program and manage their preferences and complete tasks online, such as enrolling in benefits. Some ASPs also provide consultants that help train and develop staff and resolve workplace conflicts on an as-needed basis.

**Common human resources skills**

Individuals who work in HR typically have strong people skills and enjoy helping others succeed. Here are a few of the skills and strengths necessary to excel in a human resources career:

* **Interpersonal skills:** As the mediator in employee relations, HR professionals have excellent interpersonal skills and can address employee concerns tactfully. They often are able to manage and resolve potential conflicts between employees and, in some situations, employers.
* **Ability to adapt to new technology:** Human resources professionals are often comfortable using technology and Human Resources Information Software (HRIS) to manage payroll and other HR processes and keep workforce operations running smoothly and efficiently. They might also require performing data analysis and projections.
* **Communication skills:** Individuals who work in HR need excellent customer service and communication skills for phone, email and in-person interactions. Good communication skills also include the ability to actively listen to employees' grievances and needs.
* **Public speaking:** Some HR professionals may give presentations or announcements in front of large groups, departments or an entire company. They might provide information on topics ranging from benefits packages to company policies.
* **Organization and project management:** HR professionals are often able to multitask effectively and manage a variety of projects. They have good scheduling skills and are able to prioritize responsibilities.
* **Discretion:** Because HR teams handle many sensitive matters and confidential or private information, these individuals are often discreet to avoid legal and professional repercussions. They often approach tasks such as disciplinary action, employee complaints or disputes with care.

**Why is human resources important?**

Human resources helps maintain a happy, legal and effective workforce. Here are some ways that HR is important for a company:

**Recruiting**

Human resources professionals recruit employees for their organization through a variety of methods, including online and in-person events, job listings and employee referrals. HR professionals often follow a formal recruitment plan, especially in industries where labor is in demand. If you work as an HR professional, you might screen resumes and conduct first interviews to discover the best candidates for relevant staff members to hold subsequent interviews with.

HR professionals also track applicants through the hiring process to keep it organized so hiring managers can get any relevant information they need. HR handling the recruiting allows other employees to do their work more effectively.

**Hiring**

Often, HR will manage all the steps of hiring, including making an offer, coordinating any necessary negotiations and getting required paperwork. They may make recommendations on what salary to offer to a candidate based on existing company salaries and provide guidance to the hiring managers on the process as needed. They will also communicate a start date to the candidate after discussing with any relevant staff members.

**Onboarding**

Onboarding is the process of getting a new employee started in their role through completing necessary paperwork, education on benefits, equipment set-up and training. Onboarding isn't always a formal process, but many HR departments are working to change that in order to improve employee retention. Employees who clearly understand what's expected of them often do better in their role, so HR professionals often reduce turnover in employees with proper onboarding.

**Training staff**

Training happens after onboarding as employees move into new roles and responsibilities, and human resources is often responsible for training initiatives. This might include company-wide training on topics like harassment or ethics, or it might include employee-specific training. Not all training will require the involvement of HR, but HR professionals often track the trainings that they or other supervisors implement in order to ensure that new employees transition smoothly into their full job responsibilities.

**Managing benefits**

Many people associate human resources with benefits such as health insurance and retirement funds, as HR is often responsible for providing benefits information, tracking benefits paperwork and reminding employees of enrollment periods. HR also often manages [paid time off](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/paid-time-off?from=careerguide-autohyperlink-en-US) (PTO) and other benefits. They may coordinate with benefits providers for their company to get the best value for what their employees need, and they also might assist with establishing how much PTO the company offers to employees.

**Writing the employee handbook**

Employee handbooks are a valuable tool for communicating rules, procedures and benefits information to their employees. These documents serve as easily accessible reference guides that standardize expectations across the organization. Because handbooks contain rules and guidelines related to job duties, HR professionals often assist with creating and revising a company's employee handbook. This might entail creating a handbook, doing regular updates as changes occur and advising management on how to write the handbook.

**Establishing culture**

HR is the starting point for a company's culture, as they often establish and enforce rules related to things like attendance or harassment. HR professionals also work to reduce conflict in the workplace and listen to employee issues. Additionally, if you work in HR, you can influence how the rest of the company responds to circumstances that involve HR and how welcomed employees feel. This is particularly important as more companies are interested in establishing diversity, equity and inclusivity initiatives.

**Organizing employee events**

Employee events might include parties, awards ceremonies, happy hours, speakers, anniversary celebrations and team-building programs. Some organizations have an employee group that arranges certain types of events, but for some organizations, this is HR's responsibility. Events are a part of the company's culture, so HR professionals can make a positive impact on how employees feel about the organization through planning fun and meaningful events.

**Resolving conflicts**

Resolving conflicts is a task many people associate with human resources because it is this department's responsibility to ensure fairness in the workplace. This might be a disagreement between two peers, or it might be a situation where there has been some harassment or discrimination. HR's task is to find the best resolution possible within legal and company rules. Depending on the size and seriousness of the issue, HR may need to bring in help in the form of an investigator or expert on that type of conflict.

**Ensuring compliance**

Human resources is often responsible for ensuring the company complies with federal and state laws in a variety of ways. This might include completing paperwork to verify an employee's citizenship or visa status, organizing required training for employees or reviewing employment laws to confirm compliance. If they operate in an industry that the government regulates, HR may need to work with management to file necessary paperwork and track any information the government needs.

**EMERGING TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**1. A hybrid structure**

The personnel groups relocated when work-from-home became a routine, leaving all the teams and companies to disband from one particular geographical location to anywhere in the nation.

Where some organizations are encouraging their employees to start in-office jobs again, many are content with a hybrid culture and are continuing to play by that.

Which route your organization takes can make a whole lot of difference between keeping or losing the workforce — around 40% of the workforce shared that they’d consider quitting if their organization puts a halt on hybrid culture.

Hybrid work culture is also a natural first step today for a business to expand in foreign markets too. The hybrid culture automatically opens the door for new opportunities for growth and earnings. Over the past few years, expanding through foreign markets has become easier and more affordable due to the rise in hybrid culture.

**2. Global expansion on the rise**

Shifting your work into the global market – remote working is an initial step. With changing times and technology the trends in [HRM](https://www.zimyo.com/resources/hr-glossary/hrms/) have taken a turn too, and the inauguration of a business in foreign lands is becoming a cakewalk. Furthermore, governments uplifting strict policies in this post-pandemic era – support the businesses too.

**3. Employee experience takes precedence**

Employees today don’t just want a good paycheck but a quality culture and healthy work environment as well. As a part of trends in HRM, a good remuneration retains an employee, and a qualified environment and experience assist in the choice too.

HR leaders should bring about methods to encourage positive workforce health, making the employees more flexible to changes and disruptions.

Organizations today are offering products, services, and methods to enhance not their own but other firms employee experiences as well. Employee management, time & attendance management, employee self service portals, leave management, etc., are all a part of the trends in HRM culture today.

**4. Analytics gaining the front seats**

With no physical human contact, tracking and measuring the work and employees became strenuous, especially when the workforce is spread throughout the globe. Analytics is said to play an impacting role in offering information for decision-making.

Employee management is an integral part of an organization. What work to assign to which employee, tracking their progress, ensuring completion of [OKRs](https://www.zimyo.com/resources/hr-glossary/okr/),and rewarding the employees accordingly is very important to make the functions of a firm a success.

**5. A surge in monitoring the employees**

With the growing number of hybrid workers, managers are often unable to scrutinize every single employee and their work. The lack of personal interaction led to a surge in employee monitoring techniques that gave birth to yet another set of trends in HRM.

Keeping track of work and performance, attendance, and leaves, are just a portion of employee monitoring practices.

**6. Automation of everyday tasks**

To give precedence to high-value and productive workings, HR leaders can leverage AI-powered solutions to automate their daily tasks that were carried out manually. Practices such as screening, sourcing talents, onboarding, keeping check of attendance, etc., and a lot more now can be carried out by the systems in this tech-driven world.

Proper workflows are set to streamline all the automation and to avoid any errors. All these trends in HRM are changing the face of a workplace and skyrocketing the growth of every organization leveraging these methods.

**7. Augmenting the hiring processes**

Yet another perk that can be considered as a part of trends in HRM are chatbots. With their assistance, employers can now manage to select quality candidates for relevant positions out of the ample talent pools available.

Functions such as resume screening choose explicit candidate profiles, subsequently ensuing in higher work performance and enhanced productivity. Solutions such as an Applicant Tracking Software are one of the latest trends in HRM today. An ATS streamlines the entire hiring process from job posting to onboarding and much more. Integrations with job boards is yet another trends in HRM that posts jobs on multiple websites with a single click.