



What Is Expected Of Today's Human Resource Management Graduate?

The management of human resources is a fairly broad discipline and a human resource management graduate can be deployed in different units of a human resource department. The management positions in a human resource department will start at a human resources manager and progress to a vice president and director with the actual titles changing from one organization to the next. The human resource manager will usually be in charge of a single unit. One may be a recruitment manager, a training manager, a compensation manager, a health and safety manager, a pension manager etcetera. As he or she progresses upwards through the ranks, the number of units they oversee grows with the highest being the head of a human resources division.

The role of the human resources professional within the organization is changing and with it so is the management of human resources. In times past, **HR managers** were often seen as the arm of management whose existence was purely to police every move you made and crack the whip at a whim. The human resource manager was always viewed as the bearer of bad news from the organization's senior management. Their function would be to oversee a department that would be mainly focused on administrative paperwork. The HR team was only meant to hire employees, pay them and fire them when deemed necessary. This perception meant that other employees viewed the HR unit negatively and effectively a hindrance to a cohesive work environment.

Even though many of these core functions of the HR team have not changed, how human resources management is positioned today has changed tremendously. And as the role changes, so do the skills required of the human resource management graduate. In the modern working environment, successful organizations are those that are adaptable, resilient having the ability to quickly change direction when required whilst not losing focus on their core business function. The management of human resources must mirror these attributes. The HR manager thus transitions from being just a strategic partner of management but also an advocate of the employee and an agent for organizational change.

The HR manager must now provide crucial input to the organization's overall strategic objectives. This will include coming up with appropriate policies and procedures around **job descriptions**, the staff appraisal process, employee reward systems, assessment of training needs and succession planning. To be successful, the human resource management graduate must be able to think like a business person. Management of human resources means that have to be able to see the place of HR within the greater context of the organization and how it impacts the revenue and expenses of the business for good.



Today's human resource manager plays the role of an employee advocate and must demonstrate the skills needed to create a motivated workforce where each employee feels at ease but at the same time understands and acts on their responsibilities within the organization. It involves empowering staff by helping each person understand that the execution of the function is for the good of the organization; and the success of the organization means their own success. Each member of staff thus gets a sense of ownership of the organization. And people will work most effectively when they feel that they are part and parcel of what they are working for as opposed to working for a management team that seems far removed.

There are numerous ways that staff can be motivated to execute their functions better. The HR manager must work with other heads of department within the institution so as to structure opportunities for employee growth and skill building. This can be anything from partial or full funding of an employee's pursuit of an additional degree or professional qualification or sponsoring a member of staff to attend a seminar or workshop. Such sponsorship can be used to motivate staff that have already demonstrated commitment and competence in their current role and will also serve as an incentive to other members of staff to give their best because it will be recognized and rewarded.

The HR manager must be a champion of change. Management of human resources means keeping an ear to the ground to see what works and what does not. Any points of weakness identified within the organization's working culture should then be proactively addressed in order to raise the organization's overall efficiency.