

Unit 1: Changing Nature of Human Resource Management

Human Resource Information System (HRIS)

Function

their employees.

Human Resource Management is one of the essential operational functions of an organization. Organizations meet their goals by and through people. Only a sole proprietor with no employees can afford not to be concerned with the management of human resources. Whether or not there is someone within the company that has the title of “Human Resource Manager” or not, someone in every organization must perform these functions. Managing an organization’s people is often the most challenging and complex task required of a manager. The HRM Department does much more than just accepting employment applications and keeping records; HRM’s role is central to the strategic goals of an organization and in the 21st century it is considered an integral part of everyday operations.

At the macro level, today’s HRM department duties include compliance with employment and labor laws, organizational staffing, training and development, employee relations, compensation and benefits, labor relations, safety and security and ethics and sustainability. All of these tasks are of primary importance in the running of an organization.

Approximately 50% or more of a companies’ operating budget is used to pay the people who work there. HRM directly affects the use of human capital in an organization through the management of people-related activities.

On an individual level, HRM tasks include managing the employee’s experience during the employment life cycle. This function starts with initially attracting the right employees through the recruitment process. HRM then ‘on boards’ the new hires and oversees their training and development through the employees’ lifecycle with the company. HRM assess talent through the performance appraisal process and rewards the staff accordingly. Many times HRM administers the payroll and employee benefit packages. Finally, HRM is directly involved in employee terminations—including resignations, performance- related dismissals, retirements, and layoffs.

The task of ensuring a smooth operating workforce falls on HRM. To accomplish this HRM professional require an understanding of the changing nature of issues facing an organization’s most valuable asset:



Evolution From The “Personnel Department” to HRM

Over the past 55 plus years the responsibilities of the former “Personnel Department” have evolved from a small department that was only involved in hiring and firing to a dynamic department that considers workers as valuable resources, rather than the earlier approach of treating workers as mere ‘cogs’ of the organization.

The evolution of today’s HRM department started with the social upheavals after the end of World War II. The 1950s through the 1960s saw the struggle of African-Americans to end segregation in the South along with bringing about equal employment by stopping job discrimination in all parts of the country regardless of race, color, national origin, religion or sex. Before the 1970s help wanted ads were listed separately in newspapers by gender. Male help wanted ads on one side, and Female help wanted ads on the other. In the South and other parts of the country, ads would openly discriminate against African-Americans, Jews, Mexicans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, members of the Hispanic community and women.

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The first major act passed to make the workplace equal was the Equal Pay Act of 1963. The following year the groundbreaking Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed. Title VII prohibited discrimination in all aspects of employment including hiring, wages, working conditions, promotions or terminations based on race, color, sex, national origin or religion.

Title VII was brought about by the Civil Rights demonstrations of the 1950s and 1960s, and specifically the peaceful protests by The Rev. Martin Luther King. The Rev. King's 1963 March on Washington was called the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," and prompted the government to pass legislation to eliminate discrimination in the workplace finally.

Throughout the 1960s and continuing until the current day several Federal laws have been passed that continued to bring equality to the workplace. These laws protect citizens based on age and disability, women who are pregnant, against sexual harassment, gay and transgender discrimination to prohibiting employers from discrimination based on the results of genetic/ hereditary tests. Equality in the workforce is an ongoing process as laws are continually being revised to cover new issues, make the laws stronger and to eliminate loopholes.

The combination of the Federal laws that brought equality, safety, and health to the workplace, as well as union and labor-management issues, to the need for a qualified competitive workforce that can adapt to competitive conditions, brought about the professional Human Resource Department of the 21st century.

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The HRM department as noted above is closely aligned with the strategic goals of the company and is involved in developing and implementing human resource strategy, job analysis, recruitment and selection, techniques for training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits, and health and safety. Maintaining all this data for the HRM Department is the system known as the

Human Resource Information System (HRIS).

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The typical HRIS system incorporates all the quantitative tasks of managing human resource from reviewing information and background checks for new employees, maintaining employee information for previous and current employees, tracking employee work time, payroll, benefits administration from medical coverage to retirement accounts and compliance reporting to the government with equal employment laws and OSHA requirements. These functions are considered the core programs.

HRIS also supports Strategic HR Management programs which provide the company with tracking potential candidates by maintaining resumes and interfacing with other candidate tracking systems. Also, this type of system maintains a centralized system with performance reviews of current employees and monitors new employee training and continuing education for existing employees. This system

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allows a company to ensure that the company is using its resources (employees) as efficiently as possible and that employees are growing and developing – a key point in maintaining employee satisfaction and retention of talent, a key competitive advantage.

According to Lawler (2012) to “implement the strategic direction of the organization requires developing and assessing the organization’s human capital and creating the organizational capabilities required to support the company’s strategic direction. It also requires shaping strategy by providing the unique perspective available via the lens of someone who has knowledge of the talent market and human behavior.” (Lawler, 2012) Lawler (2012) continues that this action requires the HRM to understand business strategy and how it relates to organizational capabilities and core competencies.

The HRM department must have a system in place to understand business strategy practices with the ultimate goal of having the best employee performance to meet the organization’s ultimate goals.

The HRIS capabilities depend on the size of the company. As technology advances so will the possibilities of these information systems.

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