
Qualification: CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

Module Name: Understanding the Contemporary HR Function 5CMHR

You have been asked to provide a PowerPoint (or equivalent) presentation* lasting around 20 minutes on 'The Function of HR' for new employees in your organisation. You should assume they will have less understanding of the HR function than those with a long experience of employment. In preparation for your presentation, you should develop slides with related notes pages, which cover the following:

- a synopsis of views on the function of HR and how this is evolving
- examples of how HR can contribute to effective change management, with reference to at least one model of change
- a summary of different ways that HR services can be delivered, comparing and contrasting the different models
- examples how HR can work with line managers to provide HR services
- a justification of why HR should be managed in an ethical manner with examples of ethical practice contrasted with examples of non-ethical practice
- an explanation of how HR's contribution to the organisation can be evaluated.
- an evaluation of two examples of published research that demonstrates the link between HR and positive organisational outcomes.

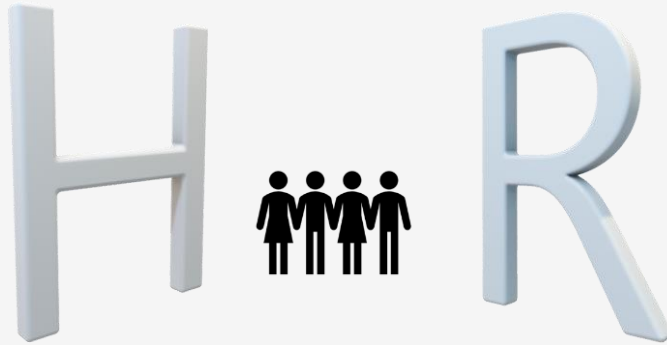
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By signing below, I confirm that the work/evidence presented is my own, unaided work. I understand the regulations pertaining to candidate malpractice and the action that may be taken as a result.

Signed: Jane Sadler
Date: 19 December 2018

The Function of Human Resources



Objectives

- Understand the role and key objectives of the HR function
- Understand the different models of delivering HR service
- Understand the role of ethics in HR management
- Understand how HR's contribution to the organisation can be measured

The Evolution of the HR Function



(Taylor, S & Woodhams, C, 2012)

The concept of personnel management began in the industrial revolution with the role being primarily concerned with keeping records, processing pay and ensuring adherence to policy and procedure. Whilst there was an element of staff welfare this was not at the forefront of the function. By the beginning of the 20th Century the focus had changed, necessary administrative duties were still undertaken but an understanding was being formed that non-monetary factors had a positive impact on employees, resulting in a strong focus on employee welfare in addition to managing union relationships. Due to the high unionisation of industry there was reduced flexibility for HR to implement company specific policies/procedures. This era, however, showed a change in approach to the workforce seeing them as valuable resources rather than just workers. By the end of the 20th Century the function of HR had evolved further and a degree of power was given to the function. This was due to changes in the employment market, advances in technology, the decrease in unionisation and a realisation that employees were now assets differentiate companies from their competitors. With a new found freedom to develop individual policies and practises the HR function was strategic and aligned with business objectives- the term strategic human resource management was born. (Taylor & Woodhams, 2016) HR had moved from transactional to transformational, focusing on creating a high performing culture, achieving organisational goals through continuous

improvement and change management. (Crowley, 2017) and will continue to move forward being future-focused and insights driven.

The 21st Century HR Professional



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukmC6F0JvQw>

The purpose of Human Resources Management

“To support the delivery of organisational strategy and objectives through the effective management of people and their performance”



Wilkinson, K. & Taylor, S. (2012)

(Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016) detail that the purpose of today's HR function is to support the delivery of organisational strategy and objectives through effective management of people and their performance. In 2018 the CIPD launched a new profession map with the purpose of the HR function at its core outlining the need to 'champion better work and working lives' whilst delivering organisational and societal outcomes. (CIPD, 2018a). To achieve this HR policies must not only be horizontally integrated but vertically integrated with the overarching business strategy. HR must attract and retain people with the required skills and experience, ensuring that staff are developed, trained and rewarded. These activities will create a more engaged, high performing and motivated workforce, which will have a positive effect on overall business performance. (Armstrong, 2012). The HR function should be concerned with both internal practice and consider external forces and impacts in order to deliver transformational HR. (Ulrich, 2016)

Time to change!

HR contribution



Fear of Change/loss

- Work with Senior Managers
- Be aware of human and emotional factors
- Facilitate open communication
- Encourage participation and involvement
- Manage expectations
- Seek feedback and evaluate

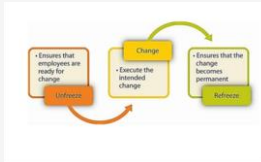


Change Ready,
Change advocates

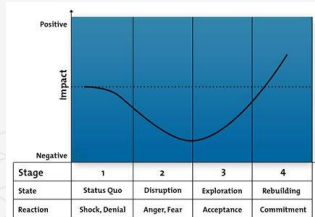
Change is something HR face on a constant basis, so much so the CIPD have recently elevated change management to one of the core knowledge areas. The key to success is creating change advocates, facilitating communication and working with senior managers, (CIPD, 2018b) whilst defining measured outcomes in line with the organisational strategy. There are many ways in which HR can facilitate change, this could be 'hard' changes such as changing processes or 'soft' changes, such as culture change, engagement and motivation. (Hall & Rees, 2011) . HR must be aware of controllable and uncontrollable elements of change, eg the reaction of the workforce is uncontrollable. A strong focus must be placed on the human and emotional aspect of change as this is vital for a successful outcome. (Carter & Varney, 2018) It is critical to understand why people are resistant to change; that being it threatens familiar behaviour, status and financial reward. (Armstrong, 2012), understanding that it is not the process of change that people fear, but the loss that may occur as a result of change. HR must ensure that the workforce are 'change-ready' by providing communication, encouraging participation and involvement and managing expectations.

Change Models

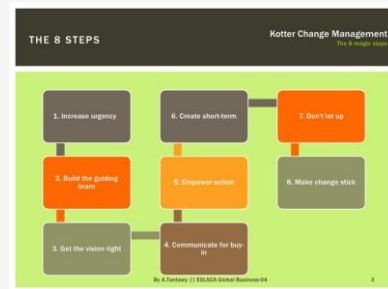
Lewin's Three Stage Model



Kubler-Ross Change Curve



Kotter's eight phase model

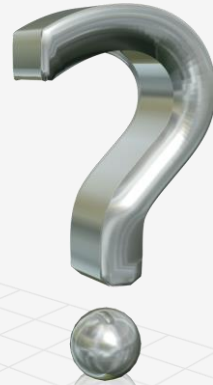


Mindtools.com (no date)
Linked In slide Share (2010)(2015)

There are a number of change models that can be used although organisations may find that more than one change model needs to be adopted as change itself is often uncertain and a flexible approach may be required. Whichever models are adopted a feedback/evaluation mechanism should be used encouraging continuous improvement. (Hall and Rees, 2011)

What should HR delivery do?

- Provide advice and services enabling achievement of organisational goals
- Align with the organisation/organisational needs
- Have the right capabilities



Organisations each differ in size, structure, culture, purpose and sector which often impacts on the way that the HR function is delivered. (Swift, 2016). The purpose of the function is to provide advice and services, enabling organisations to achieve strategic goals through their people. (Armstrong, 2012). There has been debate on whether best-practise or best-fit should be considered when deciding how to deliver HR, (Swift, 2016) with the CIPD believing that delivery should align with the business and business needs and have the right capabilities. (CIPD, 2015c)

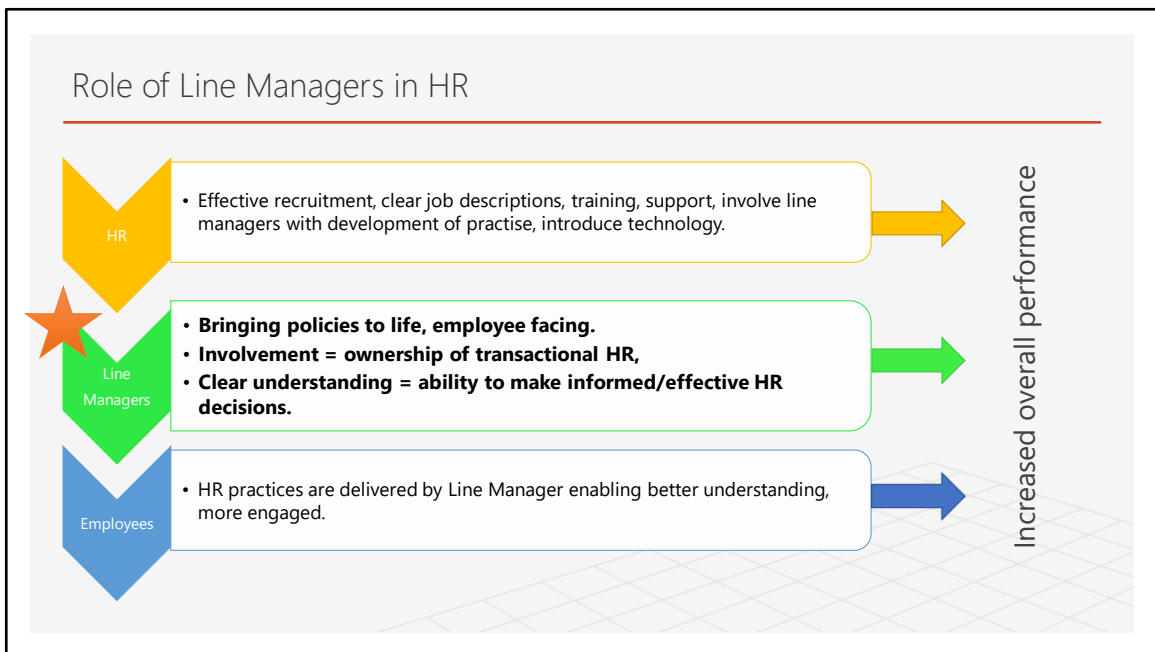
HR Service delivery models

- **Generalist**
- **Specialist**
- **Outsourced/consultant**
- **Centralised**
- **Decentralised**
- **Ulrich's Three-Legged stool**

Within HR functions there are often generalists and specialists, generalists are either found in small organisations operating alone or within larger organisations operating as part of a HR team. In comparison specialists can operate within larger organisations/teams providing specialist knowledge on specific areas or can operate autonomously normally in the form of consultants. The delivery of HR from a centralised function is still most common in organisations particularly SME's and third sector organisations (CIPD, 2014d), although with the drive for HR to add value and contribute to organisational strategy this method of delivery is changing. Whilst centralised HR functions bring consistent standards and limited task duplication, a decentralised function will often provide inconsistent standards and duplicating tasks, although have more control over decisions; can react quickly and have a greater degree of regional flexibility. Outsourced HR provides specialist skills, achieving a high level of quality, service and compliance, similar to consultants. In addition there is often a positive financial impact from outsourcing and a freeing up of in-house HR to be more strategic. Outsourcing can be impersonal and geographical distance cause difficulties in communication similar to those found in some centralised functions within large organisations. (Lewis, 2018). Ulrich's Three legged stool model identifies three clear elements; Shared services, Centres of expertise and Strategic business partner (SBP) and is often viewed as best practise if implemented well

(Swift, 2016) . Centres of expertise will provide consistent standards similar to a centralised function but in contrast will work collaboratively with the SBP, however can sometimes be impersonal similar to outsourced functions. Shared Services handle transactions for the wider business and are a single point of contact similar to a centralised function. Often at Tier 0 technology is introduced making the function very impersonal similar to outsourcing and centres of expertise although there is often a financial saving similar outsourcing. SBP due to their ability to work at a strategic level with leaders can also often positively affect financial impact although sometimes difficult for them to move away from day to day tasks. (Mayo & Scott-Jackson, 2017)

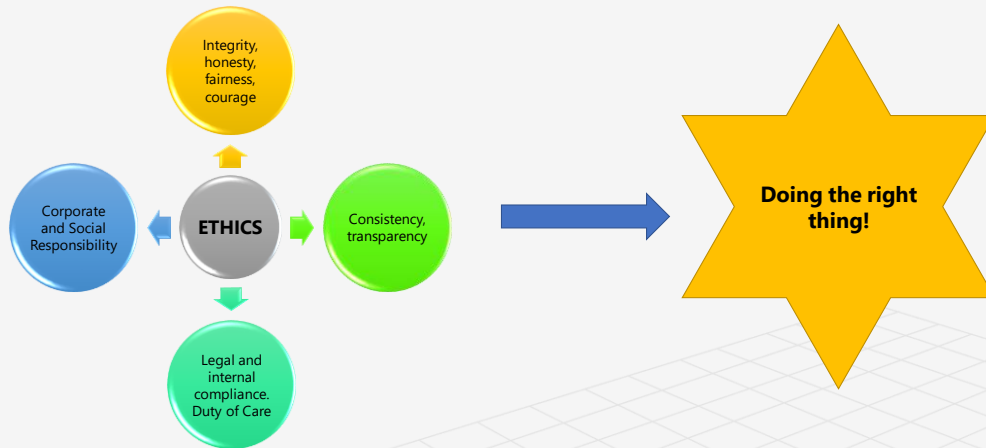
It is evident that there are similarities and differences between many of the HR models, the key point to remember is that for HR to be delivered successfully the chosen method/s must be aligned to the business.



Line Managers provide a valuable function within a HR context as they are the people who are employee facing dealing with issues and questions on a daily basis. (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016) As HR has become more strategic the need for more transactional HR functions to be carried out by line managers has increased. It is important that the right people are recruited to the Line Manager positions and for HR to provide them with clear job descriptions, effective training and support ensuring that they in turn manage, develop and engage their staff. (CIPD, 2018e) Line Managers are immersed in the operational activities of a business and sometimes are reluctant or feel unconfident about dealing with HR issues, therefore it is important for HR to work with managers giving them insight and training with regard HR policies and procedures and, importantly, involving them in the development of practise. (Armstrong, 2012) This creates a sense of ownership and a full understanding of the information, enabling Line Managers to make more effective HR decisions at an operational level. Purcell et al in Armstrong, 2012pg 44 say that "it is line managers that bring HR policies to life", in doing so they are critical to the success of HR policies and practices. HR should consider the implementation of technology to assist Line Managers in delivery of HR services from online databases designed to record and track holiday and absence to creating an intranet so HR policies and procedures are easily accessible. (Burden, 2014). There is no hard and

fast rule as to which HR services should be delivered by HR and which by line managers although there appears to be some general trends, with responsibility for organising work, recruitment/selection, performance management and disciplinary process often falling to the line managers. (Swift, 2016) However, HR cannot separate themselves wholly from these processes and should be available to guide and support Line Managers. It is suggested that there is a direct link between trained line managers and employee commitment and willingness to 'go the extra mile'. If HR and Line managers can create closer relations through increase communication, involvement and training in addition to the Line Managers being given the authority to carry out effective HR practises, they will perform better, as will their staff and thus the organisation. (Hay Group, 2013) . An adoption of HR at an operational level will also increase the ability of the HR function to add value through a business aligned strategic approach.

How does HR act ethically?



CIPD members should behave ethically, show integrity and challenge others who they believe are not acting ethically. (CIPD, 2018f) In the context of HR, being ethical means acting in a way that is morally right, acting honestly and fairly, complying to relevant standards and legislation and having a transparent and consistent approach to HR practises. HR professionals are faced with ethical decisions on a daily basis. (Taylor & Perkins, 2017) so it is important to understand that situation pressure can often lead to ethical fading in even the most ethical people and that to act ethically often requires the moral courage to do the right thing (Deterline, 2012) and carry out their duty of care.

Consequence of non-ethical and ethical practise



If HR professionals fail to behave ethically there are a number of implications:

- Bad reputation with employees and other stakeholders;
- Harms credibility
- Negative impact of employee morale and engagement

Legislation often controls how we manage people eg. The Working Time Regulations 1998 (WTR), National Minimum Wage (Amendments) 2018 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Failure to adhere to such legislation would not only be illegal but would be seen as unethical eg failing to pay the correct hourly rate or paying women a lower rate than men for carrying out the same work. Research has uncovered that a high number of UK businesses are acting unethically with regard fair payment to workers and indicates that this could be a deliberate business model. (Clark & Herman, 2017) It is easy to see how such practise would be detrimental to workforce morale and organisational reputation. In 2016 the government introduce the National Living Wage whereby it was lawful to pay people under 25, that were not classed as apprentices, a lower hourly rate of pay than someone who was 25 year or over even if they carried out the same job. Certain industry sectors that are audited against the Ethical Trading Initiative (Ethical Trading Initiative, 2018) see this difference as unethical based on age discrimination (SEDEX, 2017) and whilst legal is not practised. This is in stark contrast to companies who fail to pay the legal minimum

wage and abide pay regulations.

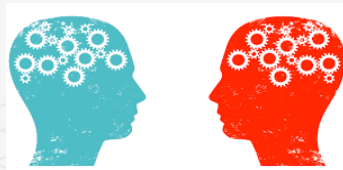
Adherence to the WTR ensures that employees have the correct amount of time off work and breaks when in work, this is an example of ethical focus on internal practises but there is also an external impact in that a better work-life balance for employees has a societal impact. Ulrich, 2016 identified that HR professionals also need to look outside the business and act in a way that promotes public good. This concept is one of Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) which is described as "the way in which an organisation expresses its values and behaviours towards stakeholders". (Kew & Stredwick, 2012 pg366) . CSR is a voluntary concept and involves not only considering and actively pursuing legal responsibilities but also social, environmental and philanthropic responsibilities understanding that in addition to making a profit the business has a wider purpose. Evidence indicates that ethical organisations are more likely to have improved competitiveness, market positioning and profitability along with a greater degree of trust from stakeholders. (Kew & Stredwick, 2012) . HR are key to contribute to the ethical values of an organisation and as such will have a direct impact on organisational success.

HR Analytics

HR should adopt an evidence-based management style, making informed business decisions by using appropriate information that has been obtained from analysis and evaluation of data.

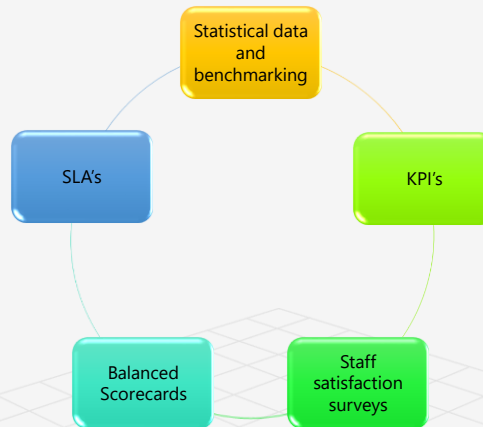
(Armstrong, 2012)

The process of analysing the data is called HR analytics and is often used to evaluate HR contribution.



HR professionals are required to add value to organisations. This requires robust systems to be implemented and the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and practises to be evaluated thus ensuring trust from wider business in the information that has been provided. HR should adopt an evidence-based management style, making informed business decisions by using appropriate information that has been obtained from the analysis and evaluation of data. (Armstrong, 2012) Frequently this practise of analysing and evaluating data is called 'HR Analytics' and if outcomes are implemented correctly can improve both the performance of employees and the business. (CIPD, 2018g)

Methods of evaluation



In order to evaluate HR policies and practises evaluation methods need to be adopted. There are number of evaluation methods that can be used depending on the type of information that is being gathered;

HR statistical data – figures relating to absence, retention, L&D etc. In isolation this statistical data has a limited use although when used to benchmark against internal statistics or external statistics ie industrial norms this can be very useful;

Key Performance Indicators – Linked to achievement of business objectives and must be specific, measurable, achievable, performance relevant and have a deadline eg annual turnover, number of hours training per employee;

Staff satisfaction surveys – Used to assess engagement. Should be carried out frequently and have sliding scale responses to assist analytics. Employee feedback and action on poor scoring areas is important for future engagement. (Barnes, 2015)

Balanced Scorecards – A strategic management system that lists non-financial performance measures alongside business strategic financial metrics providing a balanced view from a financial, stakeholder, internal business process and learning and growth perspective. Should be aligned with organisational goals and demonstrate accountability, validity and actionable, measurable results. (SHRM, 2015)

Service Level Agreements – Measures services that have been outsourced to a third

party and outline the service expectations from the supplier. Must identify the right metrics to measure within the SLA and to set baseline measurements. (Personnel Today, 2010)

No matter which method is chosen it is important to consider that as the drive for HR to be more insights driven increases evaluation methods need to be contextually, organisationally and business savvy. (Wilkinson & Taylor, 2016) and should be regularly reviewed in order to ensure their continued value and effectiveness. (Swift, 2016)

Evaluation of published research

- Guest, D., & Conway, N. (2011)
- Marin-Garcia, JA, & Tomas, JM,. (2016)



Guest and Conways (2011) research explores the hypothesis that effective HR practises help to explain the association between HR and performance with much focus being on research by Bowen and Ostroff (2004). Primary research was carried out from a limited stakeholder perspective involving 237 senior line managers and HR managers and measured a range of outcomes focusing on HR practises and effectiveness. Whilst the sample size was not small equally it only evidenced the outcome of a very small percentage of people employed in these roles, additionally it did not include stakeholders from other levels within organisations to provide a more general view on effectiveness and practises. The research did not appear to fully investigate consensus as an area of impact due in part to the restricted nature of the sample group and put forward an argument that HR effectiveness and practises were a pre-requisite as the reason for this. The research did not include any tests on implementation so full effectiveness could not be tested although it was distinctive in that it did collected data on HR practice and effectiveness. The study itself was cross-sectional identifying that the knowledge of the outcome may have affected the perception of the effectiveness, had the study been more longitudinal the outcome may have varied. The outcome of the research was that HR effectiveness appeared to be more important that practise although failing to support any impact of consensus on outcomes.

Clearly a great deal of research was carried out but the lack of qualitative research, its cross-sectional nature, the limited sample group, with regard to number and job role and the admission that key elements ie implementation and consensus had not been fully researched brings into question the validity of the findings to a degree.

The aim of the second piece of strategic research (Marin & Tomas, 2016) was to identify whether the AMO framework had been fully confirmed in the way it was first proposed. Secondary research was carried out focusing on literature reviews and scientific papers ensuring that there was specific inclusion and exclusion criteria for the documentation studied. The information studied was from reputable sources and was wide ranging, although it was still cross-sectional by nature making it difficult to identify any causal outcomes. The vast range of information from multi sectors and at varying organisational levels benefited the researchers enabling them to generalise the findings, however this large information source in contrast made it difficult to state any firm conclusions due to the differing methodologies implemented in the initial research. The research identified that little research had been done directly into the AMO model and that it had been difficult to find studies that had replicated the original AMO investigation concluding that it had been difficult to substantiate if the model was being used as it had originally been intended. Despite this it is evident that the research identified that the AMO model was a useful tool, it also confirmed that determining the effects of HRM on performance is complex and that due to varying factors such as individual beliefs it was difficult to identify a single model that would work in all contexts.

This research was restricted to secondary research, from multiple sources all using differing research methods, with different variables present making it difficult to draw any concrete conclusion. A more consistent approach to the research or tighter inclusions and exclusions would have enabled a more comparable and precise conclusion although some positive conclusions were drawn.

Both research articles showed good depth of research but lacked a longitudinal approach, both identifying that this was a common occurrence and both also lacked qualitative research to a varying degree.

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