

**SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE NEEDED TO WORK
EFFECTIVELY IN MY PREFERRED JOB OF THE
FUTURE**

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1. Introduction

The role of Human Resource (HR) Manager is becoming more strategic within a rapidly changing and highly competitive business world. According to CIPD (2023), HR managers are responsible for proactively recruiting and retaining talent, managing employee relations, implementing policies, and interpreting and aligning people with organisational objectives. This requires an exceptional mix of strategic, analytical and interpersonal skills to ensure that employees feel engaged and productive and are supported in developing their careers.

My interest in people management and a strong desire to influence workplace culture have led me to choose HR Manager as my perfect career path. Not only does this career path foster employee development, but it also offers the opportunity for an employee to have a direct impact on the success of an organisation.

This reflective essay will critically assess the key competencies required for an HR manager, perform my own personal SWOT analysis to assess my skills currently, and develop a personal development plan (PDP) to bridge skills gaps. It also reflects on how the employability and career development module has enhanced my employability skills and finally outlines how I will achieve my career aims and objectives.

2. Evaluation of Key Skills Required for Preferred Job

I looked over three job postings from respectable UK companies to determine the abilities and expertise required for an HR manager:

- HR Manager – Tesco PLC
- HR Manager – Unilever UK
- HR Business Partner – NHS England

Common Skills Identified

1. ***Communication and Interpersonal Skills:*** All three positions need productive communication through verbal and written methods to share information with staff, management and external stakeholders (Unilever, 2024). Trusting relationships and working through conflict depend upon strong interpersonal skills.
2. ***Leadership and People Management:*** HR managers must drive employee engagement, develop teams and drive organisational cultures (CIPD, 2023).

3. **Employment Law:** Understanding UK employment law is paramount in order to achieve compliance, reduce legal risks and manage employment issues effectively (ACAS, 2025).
4. **Analytical and Problem-Solving Skills:** A key criterion is the ability to evaluate employee performance metrics, to plan for resourcing and to interpret HR KPIs.
5. **Digital and HR Systems Literacy:** The need for the HR professional, typically the HR manager, to be digitally literate using HR Information Systems (HRIS), payroll, analytics or people records is continuing to increase. Systems such as SAP or Workday are the most recognised products to demonstrate a working knowledge (Chartered Management Institute, 2023).

Why These Skills Matter

Leadership and communication guarantee effective teamwork and employee motivation. Knowledge of employment legislation protects the business from litigation. Analytical skills support evidence-based decision-making, and literacy of HR systems facilitates operational efficiency. HR managers risk incompetent processes and poor employee relations, potentially leading to legal issues and affecting business performance in the absence of those skills. Based on my review, I need to have both technical skills (HRIS, employment legislation) and soft skills (communication and leadership) to be competitive in the HR field (Tesco PLC, 2024). This combination reflects the dual roles of the contemporary HR manager as a strategic partner and a champion for people.

3. Evaluation of My Skills and Competencies (SWOT Analysis)

I have produced the following personal SWOT analysis based on self-awareness exercises that I completed during the module, such as a skills audit, peer feedback, and personality profiling.

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
● Excellent communication and active listening abilities ● Compassion and the capacity to resolve conflicts	● Insufficient technological expertise in HR systems ● Lack of professional HR degrees ● Limited experience in strategic HR planning

- Well-organised and capable of efficiently setting priorities for jobs - Excellent cooperation and teamwork	Inadequate understanding of employment law
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>
- Taking an HR course that has been recognised by CIPD - Participating in workshops on employment law - Using HR professional associations to network	- HR technology is changing quickly. - Competition from seasoned human resources specialists - HR job vacancies are declining due to the economic slump.

Analysis

Based on the results of the skills audit, I am confident in my communication, empathy, and organisational skills, each of which contributes to employee engagement and conflict resolution. I only have a basic knowledge of UK employment legislation and no relevant experience using HRIS software. My options are CPD, professional HR qualifications, and using networking events to build relationships in the field. I need to provide evidence that I am up-to-date with the digital technologies used in HR because there may be threats, such as changing technologies.

The skills identified in the SWOT analysis highlight the gaps I need to close. The gaps identified are technical HR knowledge, employment law expertise, and experience and knowledge with strategic workforce planning.

4. Personal Development Plan (PDP)

<i>Career Objective</i>	<i>SMART Goal</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Gain a formal HR qualification	By January 2026, enrol in a CIPD	Look up reputable suppliers and sign	Tuition fees, study materials	18 months

	Level 5 Diploma in HR Management.	up for a class, and plan study time.		
Improve employment law knowledge	By June 2026, finish a brief course on UK employment law (NHS England, 2024).	Attend webinars or workshops and go over ACAS guidelines.	Course fee, internet access	6 months
Develop HRIS skills	By December 2026, become proficient with Workday HRIS.	Use internet guides and practise using trial versions of software.	Membership in the training platform	12 months
Enhance strategic HR planning	By July 2026, take part in a workforce planning project in the present position or a volunteer job.	Offer to help with planning duties and observe seasoned HR managers.	Mentor support	1 year

Link to SWOT Analysis

Focusing on legal and business expertise, planning skills, and HRIS capabilities will quickly enhance the weaknesses identified in my SWOT analysis, and obtaining the CIPD qualification would help me fulfil my goal to become an HR manager in the long term and to enhance my credibility in the industry. The PDP provides an organised approach to filling skill gaps, timed at a reasonable pace and filling the gaps in readiness for the strategic and technical elements of the HR role.

5. Reflection on the Module's Contribution to My Employability

The employability and career development curriculum has brought me so much closer to entering the applied HR field. Particularly, the mock interview we completed in week 7 and all of the other activities showed me I can trust my ability to discuss my experiences and strengths when applying

for jobs, and knowing how to articulate these experiences is a vital skill when making job applications.

The CV and cover letter workshop even provided me with the knowledge to modify my documents to better reflect transferable attributes like teamwork, communication, and organisational skills. Completing the skills assessment and personality profile made me more aware of myself and things I want to develop further.

I also developed my time management, problem-solving and group collaboration skills by working in groups during the module, which are all directly relevant skills for HR career management. Working with employability tools such as the Personal Development Plan, SWOT analysis, and practical frameworks for career planning was practical and instructive, and I have used both the SWOT and PDP in this essay.

Finally, the learning around professional communication, which includes creating a LinkedIn profile and networking strategies, has given me more insight into how to market myself in the competitive job market. I now have the confidence and useful skills to pursue my HR career goals through these experiences.

6. Next Steps in My Career Path

To gain formal HR qualifications, the next step is to sign up for the CIPD Level 5 Diploma. In order to obtain real-world experience with HR systems and practices, I will seek to gain part-time or voluntary HR assistant roles while taking my qualification. To keep pace with innovation in the sector, I will network through the CIPD and attend workshops on employment law. Within three years, I want to become an HR Advisor using my improved workforce planning and employee relations skills. I will ensure that I stay on track to achieve my long-term goal of becoming an HR manager by regularly reflecting on my personal development plan.

7. Conclusion

The role of HR manager is a unique mix of technical, strategic and interpersonal skills. I identified several skills, including leadership, communication, legal awareness, analytical skills and HRIS knowledge, by examining job advertisements. From the SWOT analysis I did, communication and organisational skills were my strengths and technical HR knowledge and strategic planning was

my weakness. The PDP has given me very clear, short-term steps and timelines to help close the gaps. I believe that the Employability and Career Development study has led to improved employability skills, an increased awareness of my skills, and practical tools to help me. I have confidence that by following my PDP and next steps, I can get closer to my goal of HR manager.

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