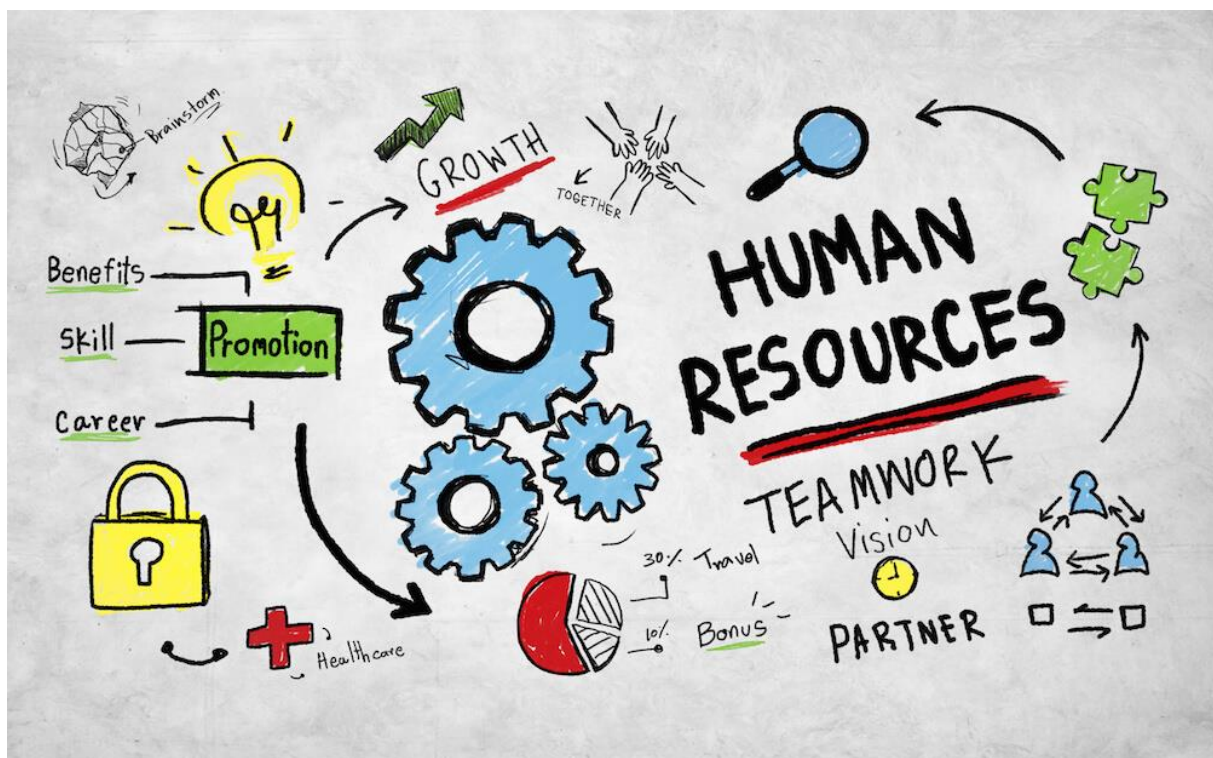


Human Resources Professional Assessment 1



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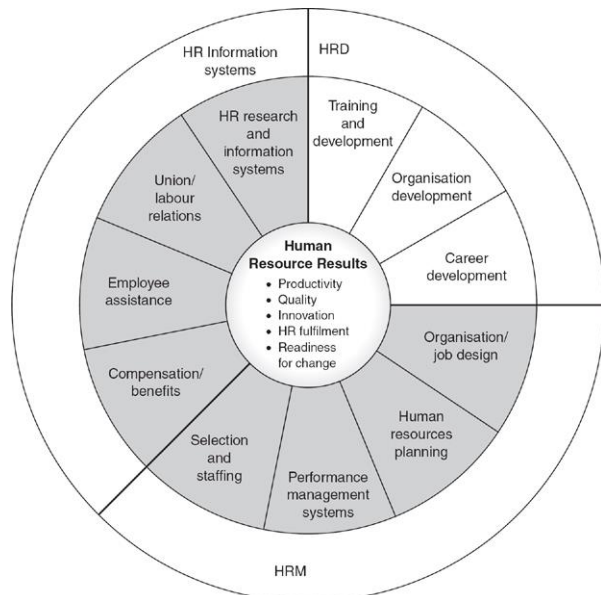
I. Introduction

First of all, management is *“the process of reaching organizational goals by working with and through people and other organizational resources”* (Management Innovations, 2008, p1). These resources are financial, human or material. Management is applied by Human Resources which are *“used to describe both the people who work for a company and the department responsible for managing resources related to employees”* (Human Resources Edu, 2018, p1). Through this report, what it means to be a Human Resources Professional will be described, group dynamics characteristics and conflict resolution methods will be evaluated, project management using and problem-solving techniques in relation to a project will be provided and a professional development plan will be developed.

II. Activity 1: What it means to be an HR professional?

At first, HRM signified *“a strategic, integrated and coherent approach to the employment, development and wellbeing of the people working in organisations”* (Armstrong, 2016, p53). In order to achieve business objectives, a company ought to build strong teamwork with competent employees. That’s why, HRM goals support the organisation *“in achieving its objectives by developing and implementing human resource strategies that are integrated with the business strategy and ensure that the organisation has the talented, skilled and engaged people it needs”* (Armstrong, 2016, p53). According to Baczor & Zheltoukhova (CIPD, 2017, p4), *“there is a critical role for the HR profession of the future to play, by developing its expertise in human and organisation behaviour and using that to help create business solutions that have lasting benefits for all stakeholders.”* HRM system can be divided into five functions (Armstrong, 2016, p59) and through the McLagan’s wheel:

- Organisation: development, job design and employee engagement.
- People resourcing: workforce planning, recruitment and selection, talent management, employee wellbeing.
- L&D: learning, management, performance and knowledge management.
- Reward management: job evaluation and pay.
- Employee relations: employees’ relationship, communication and employee voice.



Although there are different HRP tasks as recruitment and selection, ensure that every employee is paid correctly and on time and reward good performance, HRP is integral to the delivery of an organisation’s longer-term strategic objectives (Taylor & Woodhams, 2016, p7). However, in order to be a good HRP, there is a very important ethical dimension to respect and there are codes of professional conduct which define ethical standards that profession’s members should adhere to (CIPD code of conduct, 2008). HRP ought to have special behaviour regarding respect for laws, always be honest and transparent, ensure accurate payment, confidentiality and privacy (Armstrong, 2016, p162) but also make responsible decisions by considering different ethical perspectives, take responsibility in actions and always say the trust (CIPD, 2018). Moreover, *“ethical theory provides a system of rules that guide us in making decisions about what is right or wrong and good or bad in a particular situation”* (Northouse, 2016, p330).

Furthermore, strong competencies and skills are very important to become a successful HRP. The CIPD's HR Profession Map sets out in detail the competencies which HRP will need *"in the foreseeable future and the map itself can be thought of as a competency framework and is the product of significant research into what it means to be an HRP"* (Taylor & Woodhams, 2016, p110). According to Floor (2018, p1), a successful HRP is partner other business functions because he can speak to everybody in the company whatever his functions and his age, he wants to solve problems and he takes the long-term view to achieve the company's objectives while employees' skills stay adapted to the strategic approach. Indeed, *"the ability to apply situational judgement and demonstrate moral integrity are what sets them apart as professionals, and are important characteristics in helping organisations create long-term sustainability"* (CIPD, 2017, p5). This map includes areas relevant to all people professionals (purpose and values, knowledge and behaviours), and optional areas dependent upon the role in the company (CIPD, 2018).

First, the core knowledge area defined knowledge required to drive change, create value and make a positive impact in the world of work (CIPD, 2018). This area retains few points as *"culture and behaviour"* which the goal is to improve organisation performance and create value through different cultures and behaviours hence the ethical dimension is very important, *"analytics and creating value"* which goals are to understand how data can be used and how to interpret them in order to shape the people and the business strategy. One of other key point is *"change"* because the HR environment is changing (VUCA environment) and HRP need to understand the organisation environment through SWOT or PESTEL analysis for example in order to allow employees enable change because *"it's a truism that the world of work is ever-changing, and the standards to which professionals and professional services are held are also evolving"* (CIPD, What do we stand for, 2017, p5). Secondly, the core behaviours represent a significant shift for people professional and demonstrate how to be in different situations. The *"professional courage and influence"* area shows how to influence others, how to be confident, recognise and accept mistakes and take responsibility on it, tailor an influencing style but also communicate key information in a clear way (CIPD, 2018). A good HRP knows how to valuing people by motivating and supporting them, help them develop skills and capabilities, promote and encourage them while considering the well-being of others (CIPD, 2018). Moreover, making effective and pragmatic decisions or choices based on specific situations is another key point because an HRP ought to be open to new information and changing circumstances and adapt his decisions to take account of changes to the business environment (CIPD, 2018).

III. Activity 2: Group dynamics and conflict resolution

On the one hand, a group is “two or more individuals interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives” (Mullins, 2010). Generally, there are lot of reason for group formation as socio-psychological factors (sentiments and action-uniformities), security and safety (Agarwal, 2018, p1), personal characteristics (attitudes, values, age, sex, hobbies, beliefs), interests and goals, influence power, status, self-esteem, goal achievement, etc. Through a group, people can find their identity because “we try to understand ourselves through the behaviour of others towards us” (Sinha, 2019, p1). Moreover, a team occurs when “a number of people have a common goal and recognise that their personal success is dependent on the success of others” (Mullins, 2010). These members have complimentary skills (Spirit of HR, 2019). That’s why there is a relation between teams and groups because all teams are groups. According to Tuckman and Jensen (1977) concerned with why groups behave in particular ways, there are sequential stages of development: forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning. Indeed, an HRP can't expect a new team to perform well when it first comes together (MindTools, 2018, p1).



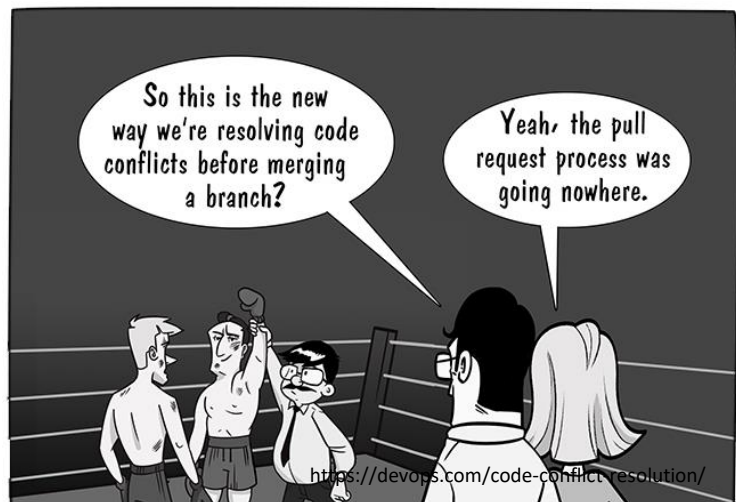
Fig 2: Team Development stages

<http://www.mspguide.org/tool/tuckman-forming-norming-storming-performing>

On the other hand, group dynamics are “the unconscious, psychological forces that influence the direction of a team’s behaviour and performance” (TeamTechnology, 2019, p1). Group dynamics are very interesting in HR because that can help to understand how a workgroup works but also to understand failures. A workgroup shows how employees interact between themselves to share information, make decisions and help one another perform (Mullins, 2010). Group dynamics produce a lot of advantages for the group members as more motivation, mutual achievement, be evaluated by others and knowing more about themselves, integrate knowledge and develop more skills, diversity

with all employees' assets reunited and increase productivity and performance (University of Leicester, 2018). However, there are disadvantages which are conflicts, different points of view, time-consuming considerations, group dominated by one person, a lazy team member or resistance to leadership directives (Leonard, 2019). One of the components of group dynamics is diversity which is very important. Furthermore, *"people matter and organisations must ensure their people management approaches do not put any group at a disadvantage"* (CIPD, 2018). HR managers ought to employ people with different skills in order to create group dynamics to increase performance. Thus, *"regardless of our identity or background, we all deserve the opportunity to develop our skills and talents to our full potential, work in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment, be fairly rewarded and recognised for our work"* (CIPD, 2018). Though, diversity can produce conflict because of the diversity of resources, interests, principles and knowledge (The Team Building, 2019, p1).

Thirdly, unfortunately, there are conflicts in groups. Conflict can be defined as *"antagonistic interactions in which one party tries to block the actions or decisions of another party"* (Lumen, 2019, p1). Indeed, this situation arises from differences because all team members are different and their differences in term of power, values and attitudes can create a conflict (The Team Building, 2019, p1). According to Harrison (2009), *"conflict is a natural in any pluralist society"*. There are different types of team conflict as substantive conflicts which *"arise over things such as goals and the allocation of resources"* (Lumen, 2019, p1) and emotional conflicts which *"arise from things such as jealousy, insecurity or personality conflicts"* (Lumen, 2019, p1). Conflict is not necessarily destructive, though, because conflict can result in benefits for a team when it is managed in a good way. Conflict occurs by different causes of problem: communication factors (insufficient sharing of information, difference between interpretation and perception, misunderstandings), structural factors (size of the organisation, turnover) and personal factors (personal employee's goals, values and needs) (Varney, 1989) but also *"competition over resources, such as information, money, supplies or access to technology"* (Lumen, 2019, p1). Furthermore, conflict is an inevitable part of groupwork. That's why, it needed to be managed in a good way if teamwork doesn't want to break down. In an HR's context, there are a lot of different conflict resolution methods. According



to CIPD, *“training line managers and troubleshooting by HR are the two methods of handling conflict that has shown the largest increases in use by employers over the last year”* (CIPD Conflict Management, 2015, p5). Managers have to manage emotions because everybody will react in different ways as an assertive, aggressive or passive way for example. The conflict resolution needn’t be done in an aggressive way because the situation will be worst. Common approaches to conflict resolution can be firstly compromising *“when the participants are fairly equal in status and when both sides are willing to give something up”* (Lumen, 2019, p1) and the issue is resolved by negotiation and neither party wins or loses (Armstrong, 2016, p332). Secondly, accommodating can be an effective solution if a side admit that the other is right (Lumen, 2019) hence this situation requires a flexible person who is trying to understand the other person’s point of view with a mature mindset (don’t try to whine until the person get his/her way (Thomas and Kilmann, 1974)). Thirdly, arbitration by an independent third-party with a constructive confrontation through a third party whose function is to help build an exploratory and cooperative climate will allow a process of developing a mutual understanding to produce a win/win situation (Armstrong, 2016, p333).

IV. Activity 3: Project management and problem-solving techniques

1. Project description

During my second year of higher education in France, I was a member of a student association called Arpège. It was a project in relation to my final year in Business and Administration in University Technological Institute (IUT). The association purpose is to organise a ski trip for second-year students for twenty-five years. We were eight members with a president, a vice-president, a secretary, two treasurers, two communications managers and an active member. The goal of the association is to set up operations to reduce the student travel price and the project objective per person was 250 euros.

At the beginning of the year, we had to classify and ordering priorities. Indeed, we had four operations to implement: inventories in supermarket through employment agencies, a wine, clothes, and chocolate operation. We had to set timelines with every operation throughout the whole year (from September 2017 to April 2018) in order to control time and to optimise personal productivity. That's why we divided the team into four groups of two in order to identify referent persons for each operation. All of us were part of every operation according to the task importance and the task impact on organisational aims and objectives.

After costing the project around 50.000 euros for the whole trip including the journey by coaches, one week in a UCPA centre with all meals included and ski material rental for ninety. Through the fourth operations, we gathered around 23.000 euros. Risks project were that students were not motivated to go skiing and to gather not enough money in order to achieve our project objectives.

Elements of project planning, scheduling and control were different methods as scheduling all operation in a calendar with all important dates. We use different types of project management tools as GANTT and the QQQQCCP method (When, Where, Who, How, Why, What, How much). Our key to success was to planning everything by doing a meeting one time a week including brainstorming.

2. Problem solving

During the whole year, we encountered some problems. Firstly, I was one of the communications managers responsible for social media like Facebook and Instagram. One of the biggest problems was to motivate all the students and I had to make reminders all week to remind operation datelines. Sometimes, I had to negotiate with some of them in order to recover their money and to motivate them to do an inventory in a supermarket. The most complex problem was that some students don't care about our project. We tried to persuade them to sell operation products by interventions during

classes with PowerPoint, reminders and summary of the current situation. Through social media, I used persuading method as individual messages for “problem students”. According to Shambaugh (2018, p1), *“being creative and innovative are the top critical success factors”* that’s why I tried to make some creative posts in social media to motivate students selling products during all operations. Secondly, one of our complicated problems was to fundraising. That’s why, we used the design thinking process which is *“a design methodology that provides a solution-based approach to solving problems”* (Dam & Siang, 2019, p1). First, we had to empathise our situation: why did we have to fundraise? Then, define the problem: how much did we have to fundraise? How can we find fundraising? Next step is to ideate: analysed and synthesised our observation with costing the project. We had classes of costing so we used skills of analysis. Then, prototype and test: we launched the first operation at the beginning of the year which was the wine operation in order to test how our team works. After that, we emphasized how each member work and we launched the second operation which was the biggest of the year (clothes operation). We tried to found a compromise in every situation to achieve our goals (Liedtka, 2015). Through the Mindtools quiz “how strong are your influencing skills?”, I got 53 which means that I am able to adapt the way that I influence others but there is plenty of room for improvement.



V. Activity 4: Professional development plan

First, “employers are increasingly aware of the importance of investing in their staff and often have structures and processes in place to provide opportunities for the training and development of their employees” (CMI, 2013, p1). PDP helps establish aims and objectives and ensure employability. For my part, I have different areas to improve: negotiating skills, creative skills, leadership, mathematics competencies and my English level (pdp evidence). I choose to develop the part about my English level which is a very important skill nowadays:

- *What do I have to do?* In order to become comfortable with this foreign language, I should practice a lot in the written, spoken and understanding ways and try to meet people (rather English people) to talk with them. Travel is one of the better ways to improve skills and knowledge in a language. That’s why I decided one year ago to go abroad for my studies in my third year. I decided to find a house-share to live among international people.
- *What support and resources will I need?* I should watch movies in English with or without subtitles. It’s better to watch a series because it takes more time to achieve it. I started “You” (Berlanti and Gamble, 2018), a series about a bookstore manager obsessed with an aspiring writer who goes to extreme measures to insert himself into her life. I ought to read newspapers and books, nevertheless, I don’t find broadsheet as we can find in France but I use to read and I am trying to read books in English. I am currently reading “Just one day” (Gayle Forman, 2013). I should listen to the radio to improve my understanding skills but English people speaks very fast and it’s hard for me to understand everything. Moreover, I try to meet a lot of people to speak with them and improve my oral expression despite there is not a lot of Erasmus student at the Uni. For 10 years, I learn English at school but the level is not very good. Studying in an abroad university is an opportunity for me to have classes in English with veritable English teachers. I will have a competitive exam at the end of March in relation to a public business school in France and I am doing some English exercises one time a day to improve my knowledge.
- *What my success criteria will be?* I consider that I had achieved my objective when I will become fluent in English. This year abroad is a very good way to improve my level. Last year I got 625/990 at the TOIEC score and I have a second TOIEC in April, I hope to get at least 750/990.

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