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Five things an HR department should resolve to do

It doesn't need to be the start of a new year to resolve to improve the effectiveness of your human resources organization.

Any time is a good time to begin practicing smart, strategic HR habits.

Below are five things your company's human resources department should be doing.

If it isn't, there is no better time to start than now.



PEOPLE
PERSPECTIVE

JOHN
ALLEN

BECOME PROACTIVE

You should work to shift HR from being a reactive, administrative function to a proactive, business-oriented unit.

When you consider that HR is responsible for acquiring and overseeing one of your company's most vital assets — its employees — it becomes obvious that the group should understand and be aligned with the organization's business goals and objectives.

Include HR in the strategic planning process so the department can proactively recruit for growth or redeploy talent to address changes within the company.

If your company's current HR organization isn't capable of thinking or acting strategically, think about whether and how the department may need to change to better serve the company.

REWARD PERFORMANCE

Develop a sustainable process for evaluating and rewarding performance.

If aligning the human resources department to the organization's goals and objec-

tives seems difficult at times, try to align individual employees to move the company in the direction management wants to take it.

One way to ensure employees are working toward a common goal is to establish a performance evaluation process that measures performance based on a set of criteria tied to that goal.

A consistent and objective evaluation process can also help to ensure that your organization is rewarding employees based on merit rather than favoritism.

USE TECHNOLOGY

Engage work force optimization technology to track productivity and minimize costs.

Web-based time and labor management technology is making time cards and manual time entry systems obsolete, while providing business owners with progressive tools to conduct more thorough planning and organizing of personnel.

Imagine being able to tap into real-time labor data online anytime or anywhere in order to assess current staff coverage, identify immediate staffing needs and make changes accordingly.

With an optimum level of transparency and technology, even details such as potential cost overruns caused by excessive overtime can be red-flagged and calculated so managers can make quick, cost-saving decisions.

BE VIGILANT

Alleviate common risk factors associated with the HR function.

People aren't perfect, so it is of critical importance that your HR organization maintains practices to mitigate the risks as-

sociated with human imperfection.

During the hiring process, religiously conduct background checks and drug testing.

Insist on professional references, not merely ones from family or friends.

To prevent litigation, conduct annual diversity training, harassment training and salary surveys, and ensure that policies and standards are applied equally to all employees.

To protect employees' safety, implement a workplace security policy with photo ID cards, a receptionist and a visitor sign-in sheet, and always remember to lock up sensitive personnel information.

ESTABLISH A BRAND

Make an effort to establish an employment brand that attracts exceptional talent and enhances employee commitment.

Every savvy businessperson knows that a strong brand helps attract buyers and build consumer loyalty.

The same is true of a company's "employment brand."

By promoting an attractive corporate culture and offering competitive compensation and flexible benefits, a human resources department can help ensure that a company is perceived as an employer of choice in the markets where it operates.

Perhaps these five things won't transform your company, but any one might transform how your HR department functions.

And since HR touches every single employee in your organization, there is no better place to start.

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