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The Human Resource Body of Knowledge

HRBOK™

The way organizations of today utilize the human resource (HR) department tells the story of HR. Some companies continue to view HR as personnel departments and compliance officers, managing the transaction of payroll, processing new hire paperwork, and terminating non-performers. The second type of company uses human resources to its strategic advantage. Organizations of the second type recognize and support the valued contributions of a high-functioning HR department, delivering outcomes through people management, group management, and ultimately the management and understanding of the organization as a whole (see Figure 1.1).

The Building Blocks

The inconsistencies in the ways companies use their HR competencies mirror nearly perfectly the evolution of the profession. As the business landscape has changed, the HR industry has changed as well, and some businesses and industries have been better at keeping the two aligned than others.

The early twentieth century was characterized by enormous growth in industrialization and the country's labor pool. Large factories in the northern states expanded beyond textiles and into the middle states, creating a boom of work and many lifetime jobs. This industrialization required more workers, and the European immigrant population from countries such as Italy and Hungary grew as a result. Railroads expanded, decreasing the cost of transportation. Workers



Figure 1.1 Human Resource Management

continued to organize for better working conditions. Human resources had a new job, and it was the *industrial relations* manager—relations with labor unions and interactions between humans and processes, and between humans and machines.

Industrial Relations

The relationship between an employer and its employees

The relationship between the management of an industrial enterprise and its employees, as guided by specific laws and regulations

Automating manufacturing processes fostered the development of mass production, bringing a whole new perspective to the workplace. For the first time, U.S. businesses had to think about managing full-scale operations and the people it took to perform them. How should large companies be structured? How should the work be organized? How should people be managed? Personnel became a *staff unit*, an independent department whose job was to advise all *line management* functions.

It wasn't just businesses that were seeking answers. The government took a keen interest in the way these taxpaying giants were behaving, and began influencing how businesses would be run through laws. HR added new responsibilities to its job description: policy maker and *compliance* officer.

Staff Units

People who support line management

Work groups that support the major business of an organization with activities such as accounting, customer service, maintenance, and personnel

Line Management

People who create revenue for organizations

Work groups that conduct the major business of an organization, such as manufacturing or sales

Compliance

Obedience, conforming

Following established laws, guidelines, or rules

As companies evolved and thought leaders of the day discovered that businesses could significantly influence individual employee behavior to achieve strategic goals, the transactional nature of HR work was not enough. Everything was in motion, with a mix of moving targets made up of the competitive and the resource management needs of the business (financial, physical, and knowledge). HR began to address the interpersonal skills of the workforce, applying principles of communication, leadership, and team-building skills. The human relations role of HR came to be. As the market deepened into international waters and competition increased, it became essential to employers that they find, develop, and retain key talent, adding the development and management of a *human capital strategy* to HR's increasingly important role.

Human Capital Strategy

Employment tactics, plan for managing employees

Methods and tools for recruiting, managing, and keeping important employees

The academic and scientific communities were experiencing momentum similar to that of other industries. As technological and economic progress was made in the workplace, psychology and the social sciences were creating a bank of empirical evidence on how best to manage organizational, individual, and group performance through systematic interventions. This work formed the basis for industry best practices around *organizational development*. Enter HR as the behavioral scientist.

Organizational Development

Planned process to improve an organization

Planned process that uses the principles of behavioral science to improve the way an organization functions

Finally, the globalization of the workforce and business structures created a need for HR practices across geographic borders. Decreased trade barriers, the search for new markets, the rapid development of technology, and the rise of e-commerce platforms have all contributed to the internationalization of business. HR was tasked with international human resource management (IHRM) strategies—adapting home country practices to global conditions.

It was and continues to be clear that the evolved HR role of industrial relations, compliance, human relations, strategy, organizational development, and IHRM has formed a powerful discipline from which organizations could push their competitive performance.

The HR Profession

In the late 1960s, a study by Cornell University found that a profession is defined by five main characteristics.¹ They were:

1. A profession must be full-time.
2. A profession must have a national professional association.
3. A profession must have a certification program.
4. A profession must have a code of ethics.
5. Schools and curricula must be aimed specifically at teaching the basic ideas of the profession, and there must be a defined common body of knowledge.

Based on this, the American Society of Personnel Administration (ASPA) began to design a formal human resource profession, seeking to frame the context from which the practice would be performed. These activities included organizing the

existing academic principles into a formal program to teach human resources. It gave influence to the formal association of the ASPA, which morphed eventually into what is now the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). A code of ethics was adopted, serving to guide the highest standards of professional behaviors. In 1973, the ASPA Accreditation Institute (AAI) was formed to meet the professional certification requirements. The first certification exams were given in 1976. The AAI as we know it today is called the Human Resource Certification Institute® (HRCI®).

All of these efforts served to create the six domains of human resource management (HRM). The foundation of *human resources* is built upon the human resource body of knowledge—the HRBoK™.

HR

Human Resources

Function within an organization that focuses on implementing organizational strategy, as well as recruiting, managing performance, and providing direction for the people who work in the organization

The Six Domains

This book is organized according to the six domains of human resources that are rooted in HR's origins, but have evolved to reflect current conditions. These domains are reviewed in more detail next.

Business Management and Strategy

The domain of business management and strategy (BMS) is the area where HR experts look at the organization as a whole while establishing goals and outcomes for its parts. It is the foundation for all other HR activities, providing macro-level direction through strategy development and operational direction through business management.

The goal of this domain is to develop and support the company's mission, vision, and values. HR is expected to shape policies and HR programs around the company identity and employer brand while supporting the behaviors that achieve strategic goals and objectives.

All of the aforementioned outcomes are served when HR professionals are adept at managing change on a local and global scale, and being accepted as organizational leaders (see Figure 1.2).

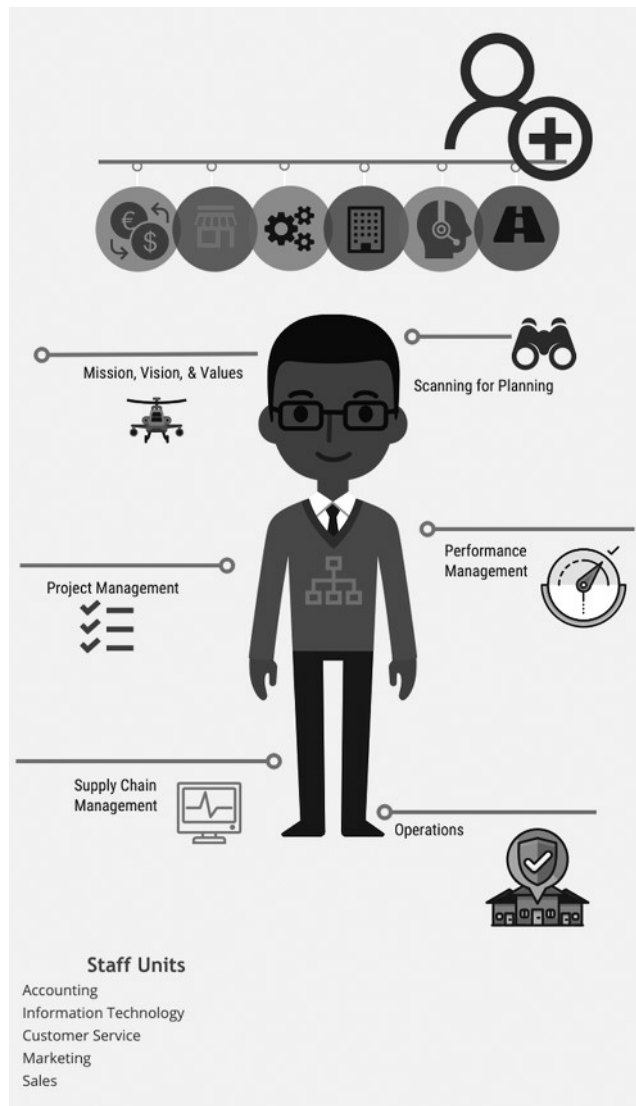


Figure 1.2 The Influence of Contemporary HR

Workforce Planning and Employment

If BMS is strategically focused, the domain of workforce planning and employment (WPE) is operationally focused. This is where HR practitioners are experts in recruitment, selection, and employee separation. These two practices are the bookends of the life cycle of the employee; the other domains address all areas in between (see Figure 1.3).

Key to all the activities of HR in this domain is alignment:

- *Aligning jobs to company goals and activities.* Using the principles of job design, HR supports productivity outcomes through work flow analysis.

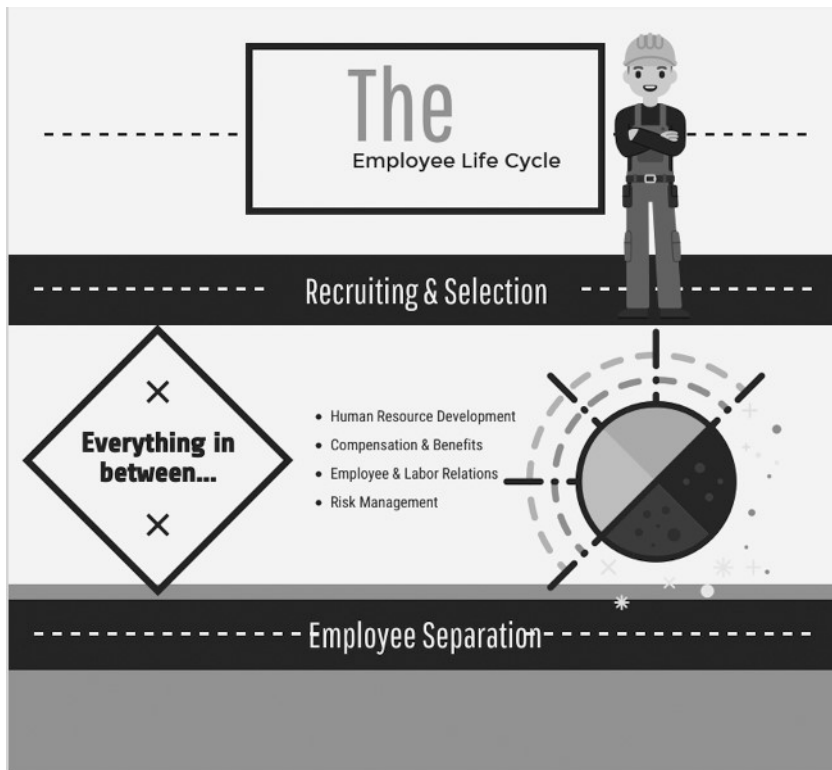


Figure 1.3 The Employee Life Cycle

- *Aligning jobs to people and people to organizations.* This is known as fit. HR uses both job and company data to predict the success of new hires and separate those with poor fit.
- *Aligning resources to strategy.* By systematically reviewing company business plans and strategies, HR determines the human capital requirements to achieve business goals. This includes both staffing up and downsizing.

Human Resource Development

In the domain of human resource development (HRD), HR supports organizational strategies through managing performance. It begins with conducting needs assessments to identify gaps between current performance and the desired state. This is followed by building programs that address the gaps. These programs may be people oriented, such as performance management systems and leadership development, or process oriented, such as through quality initiatives.

Additionally, the management of individuals requires expertise in motivating adults to do the work, developing tools beyond the paycheck. Understanding how

employees learn and paying attention to what employees need form the basis for employee training and development activities.

Compensation and Benefits

While compensation and benefits (CAB) are not the sole motivating factors for workers, poor management of the programs results in highly dissatisfied workers. CAB programs are heavily influenced by the concepts of equity and loyalty:

- Perceptions of justice are very closely linked to CAB programs.
- Compensation and benefits programs increase employee loyalty.

Both of these concepts are linked with the *psychological contract*: the mutual expectation of an exchange of fair behaviors, implied and codified over time through experience. Employers expect employees to do their best work, remain loyal, and stay until work is completed. Employees expect fair pay, promotions, and job security.

Psychological Contract

Beliefs that influence the employee-employer relationship

An unwritten agreement of the mutual beliefs, perceptions, and informal obligations between an employer and an employee, which influence how they interact

The reception other HR programs receive in terms of employee engagement and responsiveness must pass first through the psychological veil of CAB programs. Additionally, employers need their CAB programs to remain competitive while dealing with increasing labor and health care costs. Employers pay a cost above and beyond employee base wages, and this burden must be factored into the design of all CAB programs to deliver a return on investment (ROI) and retain the company's value (see Figure 1.4).

Employee and Labor Relations

Key to understanding and practicing human resources is knowing that each domain is connected and dependent upon the functioning of each department. When one domain of HR is dysfunctional, performance in the other domains is, to varying

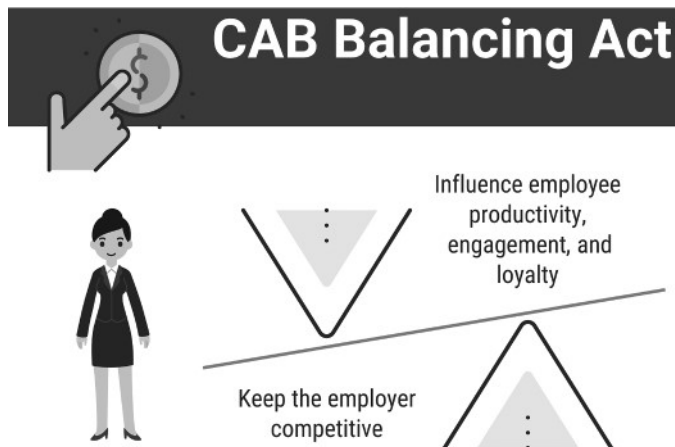


Figure 1.4 CAB Balancing Act

degrees, impaired as well. Perhaps in no other area is this as true as in employee and labor relations (ELR). The management of the relationship between the employer and the employee forms the energy of the company culture, the pulse of employee performance. The artful practice of communication is the conduit through which information flows, and determines both the speed of transfer and the obstacles encountered along the way.

It is in this domain that discipline and terminations are processed and management under the watchful eye of an employee union is done. Both of these conditions may be fraught with emotion and conflict, requiring the true advocacy role of human resources to be practiced, serving the needs of both the employer and the employee.

Risk Management

Risk management (RM) is the domain of HR that manages employee health, safety, and security, along with protecting the employer from loss and liability. Identifying personnel as human assets, while impersonal, does give clarity to the need for protection. HR is tasked with protecting all assets of the organization, from the human to the physical and, in the twenty-first century, the information assets for all *stakeholders*. Employers have a duty of care regarding their workers, and an obligation to protect the company from risk. Both are underscored by compliance with safety, security, and governance laws.

Education and prevention are at the heart of all RM programs. When employees understand the hazards associated with their work and are taught how to protect themselves from said hazards, then injuries, accidents, and near misses decrease. When financial and purchasing accountability processes are developed, controls are introduced to protect assets.

HR helps the companies they serve conduct risk assessments, working with internal and external experts to identify threats and build behavioral and environmental controls to reduce exposure. Response plans must be built and tested for if (when) the controls fail, and refined as conditions change.

Stakeholder

An interest holder in an organization

A person, group, or organization that has a direct or indirect interest in the organization (for example, owners, investors, employees, suppliers, unions, or the community)

The Age of Organizational Behavior

Gary Vaynerchuk tweeted² that a company environment is about the people, not about whether there is a foosball table in the break room; this is a great example of the bridge between human relations and organizational behavior (OB). By definition, OB is both theory based and practically applied, using analytical techniques of people, group, and organizational factors. Kinicki and Fugate in their phenomenal book *Organizational Behavior*³ defined OB's focus as managing people within and between individual, group, and organizational levels.

Human relations formed in response to evidence that organizational behavior influences individual behavior. How people are treated, and how they *think* (perceive) they are being treated makes a difference in how they perform. For this reason, companies began investing and experimenting with the human side of production as opposed to focusing only on outputs. The quality of leadership, the way communication flowed, and the way coworkers interact formed best practices to engage and retain a talented workforce.

Capital is an interesting word meaning “wealth in the form of assets” (www.businessdictionary.com). This definition and that of human capital are rooted in possibility: If a company has financial assets, it can direct those resources to solve problems. Similarly, if a company has a wealth of knowledge workers, it can deploy them to solve problems, take advantage of opportunities, and, ultimately, successfully compete in its market. A current or future employee with the right knowledge, skills, and abilities represents a company's ultimate ability to both sustain its