

The HRM Challenge

Ever since the establishment of Human Resources Departments (HRD) in the 20th century, most enterprises and organizations that employ workers, have come to appreciate that the HRDs have a role to play in addressing misunderstandings between employees and their employers. However, there is also an awareness that the HRDs have a responsibility to focus on the varied functions of the enterprise and organization, and on the management of people. This consciousness extends to the understanding of the responsibility to adopt a strategic approach to nurturing and supporting employees, and to establish a conducive and positive workplace environment.

At the heart of the varied functions of the Human Resources Department, would be the empowerment, engagement, personal and professional development of workers. This is all linked to paying attention to the welfare and interest of workers. Generally, Human Resources Management (HRM) is concerned with the practice of recruiting, hiring, deploying and managing an organization's employees. Other aspects of HRM are, training and development of employees, employee relations, managing compensation and social security benefits. Wrapped up in all of this is the understanding of what is required to motivate and incentivize workers, to address performance management, to enhance the development of the enterprise or organization, and to establish good workplace communication.

The bottom line is that HRM places attention of the function of people within the business enterprise and organization, for the sole purpose of ensuring that at all times, best work practices are observed. Ensuring compliance and workplace safety are two critical aspects of HRM which are to be highlighted. Human Resources Managers and their department team members, have the responsibility of delivering on all aspects of Human Resources Management. In setting the tone for the effective functioning of the enterprise or organization, human resource managers are expected to be in the forefront of developing policies that relate to the working environment. They ought to be mindful that the interest of the enterprise and organization will be best served, where there is inclusiveness in the process, by way of securing the input of the workers and their trade union.

Human resource managers and those who work in the human resource department, should be aware of what is required under their practice. It extends to include the management of and using people effectively, developing competencies that enhance individual and organizational performance, Increasing the innovation, creativity, and flexibility necessary to enhance competitiveness, applying new approaches to work process design, succession planning, career development, inter-organizational mobility and tying performance appraisal and compensation to competencies.(Will Kenton June 2022).

In the midst of the many layoffs and retrenchment programmes being experienced within the private and public sector, questions are left to be answered as to whether these actions are in conflict with the expectation of the human resources department, of focusing on the recruiting

The HRM Challenge: Dennis de Peiza: Labour & Employee Relations Consultant: Regional Management Services Inc. 17 February, 2023

and retention of employees. This development can be said to be contributing to the undermining of the role that human resource management department is expected to play, of stimulating workplace productivity, improving efficiencies and enhancing the development of the enterprise or organization.

With the several experiences recorded of workers' dissatisfaction with the workplace, it is questionable how much of this can be attributed to the lack of success of the human resources department in addressing processes, approaches, and providing business solutions to management. If it is that human resources departments are doing a good job in developing policies, hiring /recruiting, completing the training of employees, managing conflict and dispute resolution, managing payroll and employee benefits, then it is questionable as what is contributing to the growing decline of workers' satisfaction, staff morale and poor employee – management relations.

In recent times, human resources departments have been kept busy in delivering on the retrenchment and laying off workers. Many workers have refused offers to return to their workplace on a contract of employment, or to be engaged under flexible work arrangements. With this being the case, it can be surmised that human resources departments are being challenged to embrace and adapt to inevitable change. They must be able to attract and retain new talent, create a more productive workforce, manage the introduction of new technologies into the work environment, and to create and maintain a conducive work environment.

It may be that the biggest challenge facing human resource management practitioners, is responding to the growing conflict and hostility in the workplace. Moreover, there is also that of having to deal with the changing policies put out by the employer, and the mix signals that come with them. Finally, the issue of duty of care comes to the fore, as human resources managers may be accused of failing to engineer a positive work-life balance, so as to ensure employee's productivity and retention.