

The Human Resources Practice

Traditionally, the role of the human resources manager in an enterprise was for the most part limited to the recruitment and hiring of staff, and to carrying out administrative duties that including maintaining and updating employees' personal records. Some emphasis has always been placed on providing training for employees. Based on the perceived limitations of the overall role, the term Personnel Managers was used to describe this group of professionals. Overtime it has been recognized that human resources managers have an important role to play in the training and development of the members of staff of an enterprise. It has also been recognized that the management of compensation and rewards benefits programmes are also the responsibility of the human resources manager.

The role of the human of the human resource manager can now be best described as vital to the management of the enterprise. The matter of recruitment and hiring of staff has increasingly become a challenge with which human resources professionals have to cope. With the growing competition in the labour market, where there is much emphasis being placed on attracting the best potential employees, attention is directed at recruiting and hiring individuals who have the knowledge base and requisite skills sets. There is also the need to find persons who are trainable, possess the correct work attitude and work ethic, are committed, have the ability to perform, and reach and maintain required quality standards with limited supervision. Human resources managers are now more inclined to recruit and hire individuals who are computer literate, demonstrate the ability to multi task, and posses the qualities of being a team player.

Today's employers are unlikely to undervalue the role of the human resources practitioners. They have come to respect the fact that human resources professionals play a pivotal role in helping to controlling the labour costs of the enterprise, the motivation of members of staff towards ensuring greater level of productivity and efficiency, building staff morale, maintaining a stable work environment, through developing and maintaining a good employer- employee relationship.

The nature and expectations of their role demand that they are versed in what is required to drive the organization forward. This speaks to developing systems and initiatives that lend to the proper management of the human capital. Human resources professionals must therefore strive to remain abreast with developments and trends. Taking on board the myriad of changes to the current and future demographic, technological and societal shifts, they are expected to be ahead in their planning. Given

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the globalized work environment that now exists, it is extremely important that they are prepared to address the tending issues associated with a multi-generational workforce and growing cultural diversities.

Human Resource professionals now have to treat to preparing contracts for service and of service, developing and negotiating conditions of service, negotiating wages and salaries agreements, negotiating collective bargaining agreements and preparing policies documents such as workplace procedures manuals. Not only has the workload increased, but the demands of the job requires a persons who is competent, capable and not afraid to make decisions.

In today's world the human resources practitioner has to deal with such issues as globalization, outsourcing, retrenchment and managing the restructuring process within an organization. It can be something problematic coping with the planning, the decision making process, management and execution; as it relates to developing strategies and the implementation of policy issues. The role of the human resources professional is one that involves crisis management. Problem solving techniques must therefore be a part of the amour of the human resources professional. It is important that they are steeped in the development of systems and in establishing processes and procedures to be followed. At the same time, they ought to have a good knowledge of industrial relations practices, local labour laws and ILO Conventions.

Whilst every aspect of the work of human resources practitioners assume a level of importance, a case can be advanced that at the core of their work is that of ensuring the engagement, empowerment, training and motivation of workers. If there is a failure to achieve these, then there is the likelihood that there would be the inevitable decline in job satisfaction, diminished poor staff morale, a falloff in worker productivity and the emergence of a depressed and unstable working environment.