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What is an HR Generalist?

An HR generalist is typically the initial HR recruit made by a company. As the word implies, this is a person with a wide range of responsibilities rather than a specialized area of employment. As a result, the HR generalist is responsible for the majority of HR responsibilities, such as hiring, salary and benefits, HR administration, and other responsibilities.

As businesses expand, HR departments split up the responsibilities of the HR Generalist into various positions, with subject matter experts handling each of these. Some businesses use the title to designate the person who handles most of the organization's human resources-related duties.

What Does an HR Generalist Do?

Each company is responsible for somewhat different things, and some of the information will vary from nation to nation depending on the legislation. For instance, HR Generalists typically manage the company's health insurance in the United States, but this may not be necessary in other nations where corporations don't offer health insurance. The duties that an HR generalist might have are listed below.

Recruiting

Every organization needs someone to find and onboard new employees. Managers may handle this independently in certain small businesses, but it typically falls to the HR Generalist. Recruiting obligations include:

- Candidate recruitment
- Performing preliminary interviews

- arranging administrative tasks for meetings with the hiring team
- the process of putting together a job offer
- directing the wage negotiations
- checking a person's history
- directing the onboarding of new employees
- observing all applicable regulations regarding reporting and record-keeping
- serving as a consultant to employers
- collaborates with immigration to obtain visas for international employees

People frequently mistake HR for recruiting since the process is so obvious and involves every employee. It's not only about who companies hire; it's also about who conducts the hiring, which is one of the reasons the entire recruiting process is crucial. An HR generalist won't be trusted to handle her other duties if her hiring procedures are poor.

Benefits administration

Your employment and your health insurance are linked in the US, and the HR department deals with contract discussions with insurance companies. If an employee has a question about their healthcare provider, an HR representative can answer it or they can direct them to the carrier.

HR is also in charge of administering other benefits like pensions, retirement plans, and vacation time. Working with retirement plan providers and managing the organization's administration will be the responsibility of an HR generalist.

The HR Generalist is also responsible for benefits. Perks include anything that a firm offers its employees in addition to their pay, such as on-site childcare, complimentary meals, company automobiles, and a wide range of other benefits. These benefits are frequently organized and managed by a generalist in HR. The list of benefits might expand as businesses fight for talent, and someone needs to be aware of what the rivals provide so that the company can compete.

Absence administration

The HR generalist is also responsible for leaves of absence, whether they are taken for personal or medical reasons. This may entail managing leave policies, staying on top of documentation, and abiding by all laws

and regulations. The HR generalist needs a comprehensive understanding of what's going on to appropriately classify and authorize the absence, whether it's for cancer treatment, paternity leave, or mental health difficulties.

Employee Relations

This is perhaps the HR Generalist's job that is most visible, next to recruiting. All daily operations for managing the human side of businesses are included in employee relations.

Activities related to employee relations include the following:

- **Management training:** Managers should receive training from HR on how to communicate with staff members, how to offer raises, and how to avoid conflicts of interest like having a loving involvement with a direct report.
- **Inquiries into harassment and discrimination:** A sexual approach should be reported to the HR Generalist. Then, after conducting an investigation, she or he decides how the business should move forward. Sexual harassment, gender discrimination, age discrimination, race discrimination, and accusations of national origin discrimination are all handled by HR generalists. These are not just unethical and against the policy in the majority of Western corporations; they are also illegal. As a result, the HR Generalist needs to be well-versed in local law. An HR generalist will frequently need to contract out these investigations. The HR Generalist will need to employ an outside organization to perform the investigation if the company is small or the alleged victim or offender is well known to them. This impartial investigator assists in protecting privacy.
- **Inquiries into misconduct:** Not every improper behaviour qualifies as harassment. Employee relations should look into everything from theft to assault to generalized legal rudeness.
- **Plans for performance enhancement:** These plans are developed in collaboration with managers by HR generalists, and HR is in charge of ensuring that the plan complies with all applicable legislation, including those about race, gender, and age. A generalist in HR should be aware of what goes on around the company and can ensure that employees in similar situations are handled fairly.
- **Firing employees:** The HR generalist should be present as a support person and a witness, but the direct supervisor should be the one to announce that "Your employment is terminated and today is your last day" (or whatever the appropriate statement is, depending on the contract and country). Never let a manager fire an employee without first consulting HR.

- Exit interviews are conducted: When an employee leaves an organization, the employee relations representative should meet with them to discuss their reasons for leaving. This information should be used to help the organization develop rather than to punish the departing employee.

- Collective bargaining and negotiations with a paid minimum wage workforce. The HR Generalist can also manage collective bargaining and act as a liaison between the firm, employee work councils, and trade unions. The significance of this specific function is highly dependent on the country in which the generalist operates.

Business Partner in Human Resources

This is the HR Generalist's strategic side. HR generalists function as people experts in this role. If you have a financial question, you should go to finance; if you have a people question, you should go to the HR Business Partner.

While the employee relations role is frequently reactive (though it does not have to be), the HRBP role is proactive. An HRBP aids in future planning by focusing on the following aspects.

- Succession planning: Who will take the CEO's post if she resigns? What about the marketing manager? Is the company preparing employees to fill these roles when they become available? Are there any plans for training and development?

- Structure of an organization: While many businesses have a traditional hierarchical structure, the HRBP advises on how to make it appear in practice. And can assist in determining whether a hierarchy is the best organizational structure for this company. Perhaps a flatter framework, such as a holacracy or a matrix structure, would be better for the company. The HRBP serves as the subject matter expert regardless of the structure of your company's requirements.

- Communication capabilities: While the public relations or marketing department focuses on conveying the company's message to clients, the HRBP conveys the company message to employees.

- Expert in values and culture: Every organization has a culture and values, even if they are not clearly stated. The CEO and executive team play a major role in setting these standards through their behaviour, but the HRBP assists in coaching them and then communicating with them. Remember that proclaimed ideals and culture have no effect if the leadership acts otherwise.

Many companies use the term "HR Generalist" to describe a role that combines Employee Relations and HR Business Partners rather than a true generalist who handles all aspects of Human Resources. Although

the HR Business Partner side of things is well served by someone with technical, analytical, and financial skills, it is generally thought of as a soft-skills role. An HR professional with an MBA will typically be well suited to a stringent HRBP post.

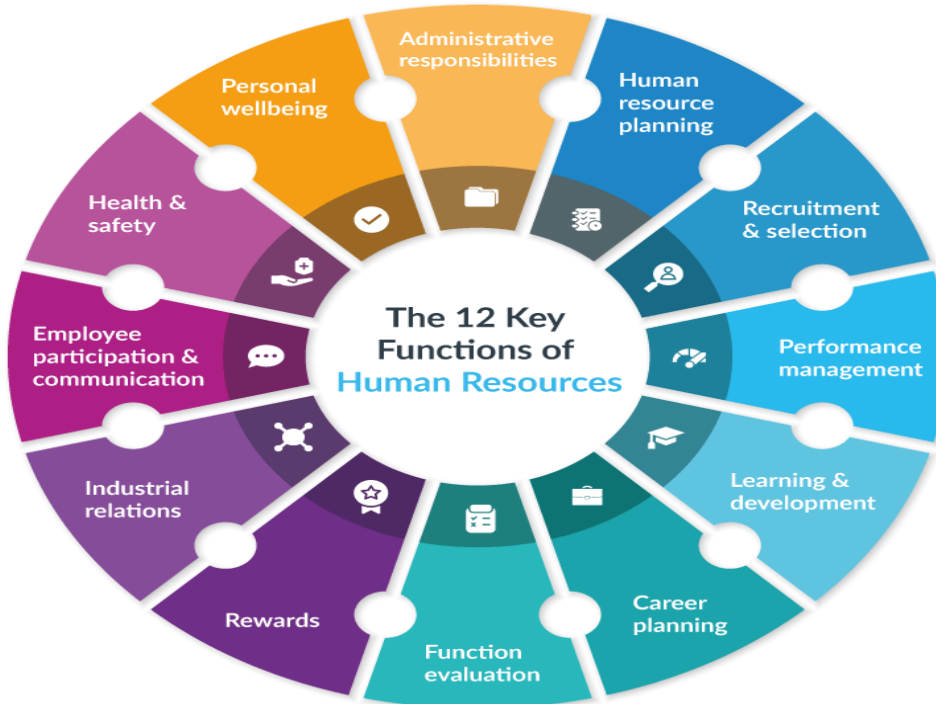
Technical/Analytical Position

An HR generalist must be able to calculate turnover as well as the return on investment in programs and policies. To advance and flourish in the role, you must have a deep understanding of analytics. Because many solo HR practitioners work for small businesses, it's easy to argue that they don't need to dig into analytics--it's not necessary to generate a turnover report when you can name everyone who gives up.

An HR analyst examines the big picture rather than the specific employee. While the other aspects of a generalist role frequently focus on solving this problem or working with that employee, analytics recognizes trends.

For example, it may appear sensible for three people to quit and return to graduate school. However, an analyst can see that the only people leaving the organization to return to graduate school are from a specific department. This could signal the necessity for either a. Examine the manager's abilities or b. Rethink how you're hiring for the job. It could be a coincidence, or it could be an outcome of a company-wide change.

Each year, the technical side of human resources becomes increasingly significant. To handle personnel data and integrate with payroll, businesses should have an HRMS (human resource management system). Additionally, there are literally thousands of applications available that can help with everything from documenting call-ins to sharing information across the organization. These also fall under the purview of HR, and while a generalist may collaborate with IT on these issues, the HR person would be the superuser and may provide training to other departments.



HR Generalist Terminology

Every trade has its own vocabulary, which might be difficult to understand for newcomers. However, HR terminology affects all employees. Here are a few instances of terms that an HR generalist should be familiar with.

KPI: This abbreviation stands for Key Performance Indicators. Each employee should have measurable goals that can show success or the need for growth.

Pip: is an abbreviation for Performance Improvement Plan. This is a paper that walks an employee through the changes and improvements they must make in order to keep their employment. They are usually available in 30, 60, or 90-day increments.

Gross Misbehaviour: This is a serious offense, comparable to stealing or violence. Without a performance improvement plan or gradual sanctions, gross misconduct can end in termination.

Initial Onboarding: This is the procedure that a corporation does to acclimatize a new employee. This is sometimes used to refer to the paperwork and administrative side of hiring. However, it should also include the training (both job-specific and cultural) that each employee will need to adjust to life in a new job.

Management of Talent: Talent management refers to the comprehensive set of HR processes used to attract, develop, motivate, and retain high-performing individuals. Check out our article for additional information.

The Life Cycle of a Talent: This includes everything from recruiting new employees to performing their final leave interviews, as well as everything in between.

Performance evaluation: This is a regular occurrence in which the management meets with the employee to assess his or her performance. Although the manager usually runs this meeting, the performance appraisal and the broader performance management process are a shared responsibility of HR and the business. This method is used to make several crucial staff choices (hiring, promotions, bonuses, and firing). Of course, there are many more phrases that an HR generalist should be familiar with, but these are the most common.

HR Generalist vs HR Specialist

A specialist can perform everything that an HR Generalist must do. In larger organizations, having subject matter experts manage each area makes sense. This enables extensive knowledge and specialized instruction.

An HR Generalist is knowledgeable about a wide range of topics, whereas a specialist is knowledgeable about a narrow range of topics. A generalist with access to training and outside resources is the ideal option for startups, but giant corporations have the luxury of specialization.

Conclusion

An HR Generalist is in charge of everything related to people. It's a job that will never be boring because the responsibilities are so varied. A strong human resources generalist can establish the tone for the firm while also ensuring legal compliance. It is an essential component of any firm's HR foundations until the company grows to the point where it can support specialists.

Required Skills/Abilities:

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Excellent interpersonal, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills.
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Excellent time management skills with a proven ability to meet deadlines.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to prioritize tasks and to delegate them when appropriate.
- Ability to act with integrity, professionalism, and confidentiality.

- Thorough knowledge of employment-related laws and regulations.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office Suite or related software.
- Proficiency with or the ability to quickly learn the organizations HRIS and talent management systems.

References

<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/job-descriptions/pages/human-resource-generalist.aspx>

<https://www.aihr.com/blog/hr-generalist/>