

GUIDE TO IMPROVING MY HR



How can I improve my HR?

What is the role of HR in the workplace and what are the duties and responsibilities of human resources managers? Businesses across the country often receive floods of questions.

Most are related to genuine HR queries, but others are simply questioning their existence.

Determining exactly what it is that your human resources department should and shouldn't be responsible for is a vital step - not only in justifying its existence - but encouraging smooth operation.



The role of HR departments

What does HR do? Human resources describes the people who work for a business, but it also covers the department that's responsible for managing resources involving staff members.

You may associate it with much larger firms, as many smaller businesses often do, but in the modern era, it's possible for SMEs to have a department. Or they can rely on 24-hour HR consultancy services.

With employment tribunals continually on the rise, massive shifts in employment law on the horizon, and naming and shaming for non-compliant firms now the new norm, it's more vital than ever to have the support of a human resources expert, if not a whole team.

What are the duties of HR departments? Breaking it down to its most simple form (there's a more detailed look further below), the main responsibilities are:

- Employee training.
- Pay and compensation.
- Employee benefits.
- Employee relationships.
- Responsibilities and compliance.

There are many human resources responsibilities, and most of them should fit into one of the above categories. But what do each of them entail, and who should be responsible for them?

HR responsibilities and duties in a company

Depending on your organisation's capacity, you may choose to assign each responsibility to an individual within your team.

Returning to that question we regularly receive, "What is HR responsible for?" Let's take a closer look at what each area involves:

- **Recruitment:** Manages recruiting and screening staff, conducting interviews, and developing staff handbooks and policies and procedures relating to new hires.
- **Employee training:** Responsible for creating training programs as well as conducting them, determining the training needs of employees in different departments and managing training budgets.
- **Pay and compensation:** Handles working with payroll to ensure employees get paid on time and correctly. Other responsibilities include pensions, bonuses and compensation.
- **Employee benefits:** Responsible for managing all employee benefits, including insurance, fitness, care, disability, and wellness programs. May also be responsible for tracking employee absences and benefit eligibility.
- **Employee relationships:** Manages the relationship between employees (such as with staff and management). This includes minor disputes as well as communication between the organisation and trade unions.
- **Legal responsibilities and compliance:** Responsible for ensuring the company remains compliant with current employment law, as well as communicating any changes to the relevant departments and handling internal legal matters, including investigations into harassment, discrimination or gross misconduct.

So, those are the various HR roles and responsibilities, but what if your HR team has grown too large, or is taking on too much responsibility? If your team is struggling, it may be time to appoint a manager.

What are the duties and responsibilities of HR managers?

While different in every organisation, one of the key roles of the HR manager is to manage, create, implement and supervise policies, procedures and contracts.

It's also their job to ensure the smooth operation of the HR team and functionality as a whole.

The list of responsibilities for an HR manager can be vast, so here are just a few of the regular tasks they carry out:

- Develop policies and procedures.
- Provide advice on key employment law updates and benefit entitlement.
- Manage and oversee any disputes, disciplinaries, grievances, absences, retirements and redundancies.
- Support the recruitment process.
- Ensure the organisation's HR strategy and business goals align.

HOW TO IMPROVE MY HR DEPARTMENT

We've put together some of the steps that you can take to improve your HR.

1. PUT THE "HUMAN" BACK IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Don't think of HR as a box-ticking exercise. We understand, that ticking boxes is fun. Sometimes, you have to get that little shot of dopamine in your day. But, if that's all you are doing, you're doing HR wrong.

HR is fundamentally about people. Despite this, the HR department in most businesses keeps its distance from the rest of the workforce. To function effectively, HR should engage with your staff at their level. A great, if slightly unconventional, way of doing this is to have HR sit with another department for the day. Have them perform a role different to their own. The effect of this is twofold:

One, it demystifies the HR department. They are no longer the ominous team who only show up for disciplinarys and redundancies. Now, they are actual people the rest of the business can approach. [Forbes advocates strategies to increase employee faith in HR](#), and you should too.

Two, the HR department gains a deeper understanding of how the business functions. By sitting with the people who are delivering your service, or making your product, they can make decisions with them in mind. They may gain insights that will help you increase retention and improve staff morale.

Try it and see.

2. IMPLEMENT REWARD SCHEMES

HR is as much about rewarding people as it is managing them. If you've already got a reward scheme in place, great! Were the employees involved in the creation of the scheme?

Ask yourself the question: "What is it that my staff want?"

While a pay increase is always welcome, there are other ways to reward staff. After having conversations with your employees, you may find that they don't feel recognised enough. Easy fix—start an employee of the month scheme. Recognise their good work and praise them for it. Do staff members feel tied down by current working hours? Offer increased flexibility or remote work after a certain length of service.

For more ideas on [retaining staff when there's no money for a pay rise](#), take a look at this article.

Whatever your approach is, make sure you're making decisions based on their feedback. Creating initiatives is great, but doing so without the approval of your staff could lead to resentment and demotivation.

3. REVIEW, REVIEW, AND REVIEW

When was the last time you reviewed your staff handbook? How about your contracts? Your pay and reward schemes?

It's easy to assume once a policy is written, it's done. Employment law doesn't change that often—right?

Sometimes there is a legal change that means we need to dust off the binder and rewrite some clauses. However, you shouldn't wait until a compliance issue forces your hand. Conduct regular reviews to see if you can bring your policies in line with how your company runs today. You might even find glaring errors that just don't make sense.

Sometimes it's helpful to perform a review as if you're building your HR function from the ground up. This way, you can make sure your department is achieving your business goals. They could be:

- Improving company culture
- Increasing staff retention
- Making departments more cost-effective

Whatever your goal, HR is crucial to achieving it. If you're uncertain about what you're looking for, you can always book a policy review with our documentation team. [Find out more about this part of Croner's service here.](#)

4. MAP THE EMPLOYEE JOURNEY

Where do you see yourself in five years? Or, more importantly, where do you see your employees?

In today's employment market, staff retention is uncertain. But, with a map of the employee journey, you can see where they'll be in five years—and so will they.

Career progression isn't the top priority for all individuals. But all staff members will appreciate seeing how they can progress within the business. The more detail you can provide the better. Are there multiple avenues for progression? What will their salaries look like at a higher level? What would their responsibilities be?

Knowing this information in advance makes progression tangible. This makes it easier for employees to make decisions about their future. It'll also mean you can plan financially and build your teams more effectively.

Back your plan up with training and development, support, and heavy involvement from line managers. They'll shape the journey, so involve them in your planning and check in regularly.

5. USE TECHNOLOGY TO STREAMLINE HR PROCESSES

In the modern age, there is no need to rely on files full of paperwork. There's no longer a need to rely on spreadsheets and word documents. There are solutions out there specifically designed to make your HR function seamless.

Naturally, we'd recommend our [software partner, BrightHR](#). This package comes with a range of tools that'll make your life easier. For example, Blip allows you to manage clocking in and clocking out at the touch of a button. PoP lets you approve or decline business expenses. The BrightHR system will keep all of your HR documentation secure in one place - and that's not all! You can manage annual leave, and meeting notes, and even access 24/7 HR advice from experts via the service.

You can access a free, no-obligation trial of the software today by calling 0800 124 4990.



WANT FURTHER ADVICE?

If you need more information or would like assistance with a particular HR issue or how you can improve your employee engagement, speak to a Croner expert today at 0800 124 4179.



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