

How to strengthen the position of HR department in your organisation.

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Almost each and every organisation has a Human Resource Department these days. It might be called by different names in different organisations like Personnel & Administration Department, Employee Relations Department, People Development & Communications Department etc. but the domain of functions performed by them are more or less similar. If the functions performed by this department is same in all the organisations then why is it so that in some organisations it is at the driver's seat and in others it is viewed as a cost centre doing nothing but merely regulatory function and manned with useless people. In India to be very frank we are yet to make the other functions in the organisation realise the importance of the HR function and having a full fledged Human Resource department.

As we all know along with capital and technology, labour is also an important factor of production of goods and services. The HR department which controls this important factor should be seen as a strategic unit contributing to the success of business. The HR professionals have to take the initiative to establish themselves as core business professionals and make the other departments realise the importance of HR function.

How to do it ?

The exercise should first start by assessing the current standing of the HR department in the organisation. It can be done in the following manner.

- Consulting peers and other members of the customer departments to know the following :
 - How the HR department is perceived within the organisation?
 - What do the peers in the other departments think about the HR department?
 - How do the other departments regard the work of HR department?
 - Do other departments feel or perceive that the HR department is adding value to the business?
 - What are the expectations of the customer departments from the HR department?
- Conducting an internal study within the HR department to assess the following :
 - Who are our customers or who do we serve? (Discuss with each employee of the department who they feel is their customer)
 - What are the needs of the various customers of the departments as perceived by the department?
 - What the HR department wants the customer's perception of the department to be?

- What are the current activities performed by the HR department? (Identifying the performance areas and the various activities being performed in each performance area)
 - Which are the areas where the department is able to deliver superior performance and which areas need improvement?
 - Do all the members of the department share the common objective for which the department stands?
 - Is the department able to provide services to various customers on a consistent basis?
 - Do the members of the department feel that their contribution is reflected in the business results of the organisation and perceive their task a meaningful one?
- Based on the data generated by the earlier two steps the department should do the following :
 - Classify the current activities performed by the department into two categories – activities satisfying the expectations of the customer departments and activities not linked to those expectations.
 - Identify ways and means to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of activities satisfying the expectations of the customer departments. This can be done by assigning proper responsibilities and delegating authority to various members of the department. If required the roles performed by the various members of the department should be redesigned.
 - Delete those activities from the roles of the members of the department which are not linked to meeting the customer expectations.
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