



Rethink HR: A changing world means new people practices

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It's time to rethink HR. It's actually way past due. Globalization, millennials entering the workforce, a shift to contract and part-time labor, an increase in diversity, technology that encourages networking, and open communications are just a few of the signs that illustrate the shift in the workplace. HR should be at the center of these shifts. In fact, HR needs to be leading the way.

It will require innovative ideas to navigate these shifts in a way that engages employees while attracting and retaining customers in a profitable path. That means HR will need to rethink structure, culture, support, policies, and more. It's a real organizational development project in the making.

Some might question the premise of this article and claim that HR is ready for the challenge or has already risen to the challenge. After all, for years we've seen articles about HR rising to the top of the organization and getting a seat at the boardroom table. Headlines like "HR as a strategic partner" have been trumpeting that message for a while. However, according to Deloitte's 2015 Global Human Capital Trends Report, only five percent of HR leaders feel their organization's talent and HR programs are excellent. That's a disappointing number.

So what should HR do? Here are three places to start:

(1) **Make life easier and remove barriers.** HR needs to find aspects of the work environment that impede performance and remove them. We are running businesses in a compliance-driven world. If there are any policies or activities that aren't truly necessary, we must remove them. Some companies are no longer doing performance appraisals;

others are removing management layers. HR needs to review how work gets done and look for ways to remove unnecessary steps and activities.

(2) **Make life simpler.** Technology can simplify work or make it more complicated. HR departments that utilize technology wisely will be light years ahead. For example, some large organizations with a spread-out workforce are still using manual processes to handle leave management. Coverage across jobsites and roles can be very difficult. HR departments that automate scheduling and leave management will simplify cumbersome processes and put accountability and ownership in the hands of their employees. HR must identify overly complex and cumbersome processes and find ways to simplify.

(3) **Create boundaries.** We live in a 24/7 world, and people are working harder and faster than ever without breaks. Employees take their work home and on vacation, and sleep with their smartphones by their sides. HR needs to focus on how to get employees their lives back. What will create space and time for people to experience life uninterrupted? When employees have lives outside work, they perform better at work and are more innovative. HR has the responsibility to help with the always challenging work-life balance equation.

What has your HR department done to rethink itself?



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