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# The all new face of HR

*An HR manager today has to be a business partner, an economist and agent of change, says Sandeep Gandhi*



→ An intriguing conversation one might have with an HR professional today would be to understand human resource management as an essential element in the strategic positioning of an organisation and one that is

inseparable from key organisational goals. One must understand that the traditional approaches can no longer work in today's milieu. From being perceived as a support function, HR has now found its rightful place and is seen as an enabler rather than just a doer. Not only will this enhance HR's participation, but also map out strategic opportunities and streamline efforts that are required to deal with emerging threats and dramatic shifts in the economy.

## →HR, as a business partner

Perhaps, the trigger to the rise of HR as a business partner is the economic slowdown, which is paving the path for managers to rely on their talent to achieve desired results. An HR manager is now required to step up his/her contribution significantly to contribute to the business success. Attraction, retention, motivation and development of talent are no longer the be-all and end-all of the HR function. In addition to these, industry knowledge has now become instrumental in hiring the right people for the right jobs, spotting critical trends related to workforce dynamics and in execution of various contemporary learning and development techniques to develop and retain talent. Similarly, I would lay huge emphasis on managing the 'emotional quotient' balance of teams, which essentially means that as an HR manager, one would need to understand the 'how' of business than just the 'what'. In addition, an HR professional also has the onus of acting as an advisor to the management and therefore, a catalyst to catapult business

performance. However, this can only be made possible if the HR vertical itself has a clear understanding of the business needs and objectives of the organisation. The best way to practice this is to start looking at the organisation as an inverted pyramid and start building each HR practice or cultural statement or an 'Employee Value Proposition (EVP)' and the rest will follow!

## →HR, as an economist

The scope of work of an HR professional has gradually widened to become very similar to that of an economist. The similarities are in terms of cause and effect implications of the decisions taken, allocation of resources for best results (in our case the resource being talent), predicting the changes and being ready to face them or investing in the right talent to achieve optimum work efficacy. Thus, the HR fraternity has to think like economists. In an organisation, it is the HR department that always needs to have its thinking cap on to figure out and implement ways to beat the intense pressures on the workforce owing to the milieu of the economy. Moreover, HR also works with the heads of departments in reducing the organisation's business challenges and delivering output.

## →HR, as a change agent

Any firm that resists change will witness a catastrophe. Change requires a lot from those who undertake it. It takes commitment and maturity to adapt and equip oneself to deal with ambiguities. However, the majority will often dread change. Therefore, HR plays the role of a candid communicator and ensures that the message of change is a good opportunity to retrospect, introspect and course-correct. So, to sum up, even change could be synonymous with joy for organisations at large.

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