

Human Resources

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1. Background

The researcher was born in Brazil fifty-eight years ago. She was the first child of her parents who did not finish the Elementary school. Maybe due the lack of opportunity of being well-educated and consequently no having a successful career, education for the researcher's parents was the most valuable good as synonymous of better future with good job and salary. Meeting her parent's requirements, she became the first family member to have a College degree. The researcher, after her graduation in Business Administration and one year of graduation studies in Human Resources Strategic Management, worked during 20 years as Human Resources Analyst for an important company in her country, Brazil.

As Human Resources Analyst, the researcher had worked developing and implementing activities related to compensation and performance evaluation of employees plans among others activities that had the purpose of having very qualified and motivated employees. She also worked as team member, executor, and coordinator, during the implementation the human resources information system in that organization. She was happy working in that company where she was a respected professional even working frequently more than fifty hours a week. However, working there made possible for the researcher provided to her daughter the opportunity of having a high level of education, having healthy food, travelling abroad, living in a beautiful and well localized apartment. Working there made the researcher to fill her sense of purpose and also build essential and truly friendships.

After the researcher left the company in 2010, she started working as Human Resources Consultant for the same organization where she used to work for and also for other organization. With a flexible work schedule and a very good income, she was able to have more fun activities. However, she left this job in 2013 when she came to the United States of America where she

joined her married and pregnant daughter. In the United States, she studied English as English as Second Language program at Union County College's Institute of Intensive English. Now, she is candidate to graduate in August, 2016 as Associate of Applied Science in Business Management. Thus, after August, the researcher has to find a job in order to continue in the United States close to her family, now with two members, and to have income enough to live here.

2. Human Resources Professional in the United States of America

According to Ferguson (2016) Human Resources professionals typically work in business, corporation, or organization managing all aspects related to recruiting employees, training and career development, overseeing compensation packages, managing benefits plans, and other duties that serve to maximize a company's business and its employees' satisfaction with their jobs. Purely, the function of the human resources professionals is to produce competent personnel and to keep employees productive. More than 700,000 people work in human in large or medium-sized companies and personnel consulting firms

Human resources includes a variety of jobs such as human resources generalists, employment and placement managers, employer relations representatives, personnel managers, industrial relations directors, job-development specialists, job analysts, compensation managers, training instructors, benefits managers, employee health-maintenance specialists, mediators, and employment, placement, and recruitment specialists. (Ferguson 2016)

Nowadays, HR professionals are being assigned with a broader, more conceptual, and strategic set of responsibilities. They often work with top management to devise plans for the optimal use of human resources. (Ferguson 2016)

Schermerhorn (2013) states that “ Human Resources Management (HCM) expertise is highly important in an environment complicated by legal issues, economic turmoil, new corporate strategies, and changing social values. The HCM staff should be experts on the state of an organization’s workforce and its ability to perform (p.13).” Human resources staff shares with the organization managers the responsibility to ensure that highly capable and enthusiastic people are in the right positions and working with the support they need to be successful.

3. Education, Experience and Certifications Requirements

Human resources’ professional need a bachelor’s degree in Business, Human Resources, Psychology or others related majors. Some higher-level jobs require a master’s degree in human resources, labor relations, or business administration.

To demonstrate abilities in organizing, directing, and leading others, related work experience is essential for human resources managers. Some managers start out as human resources specialists or labor relations specialists. Others gain management experience in a variety of fields.

Management positions typically require an understanding of human resources programs, such as compensation and benefits plans; human resources software; and federal, state, and local employment laws.

Although certification is voluntary, it can show professional expertise and credibility and may enhance advancement opportunities. Many employers prefer to hire certified candidates, and some positions may require certification. The Society for Human Resource Management, Human Resource Certification Institute, WorldatWork, and the International Foundation of Employee Benefit

Plans are among many professional associations that offer a variety of certification programs (Bureau of Statistics, 2016, p.2)

According to U.S. News (2016), professionals in Human Resources area are the “industry standard” certifications. A graduate degree in human resources, a Masters of Business Administration, or a law degree will also give those professionals a helping hand in this field. Internships are a recommendable.

4. Skills / Abilities Requirements

According to Bureau of Statistics (2016), there are some important qualities to a professional in order to be Human Resources Manager.

Decision making skills: Human resources managers must be able to balance the strengths and weaknesses of different options and decide the best course of action. Many of their decisions have a significant impact on workers or operations, such as deciding whether to hire an employee.

Interpersonal skills: Human resources managers need strong interpersonal skills because they regularly interact with people. They often collaborate on teams and must develop positive working relationships with their colleagues.

Leadership skills: Human resources managers must be able to direct a staff and oversee the operations of their department. They must coordinate work activities and ensure that workers in the department complete their duties and fulfill their responsibilities.

Organizational skills: Organizational skills are essential for human resources managers. They must be able to prioritize tasks and manage several projects at

once.

Speaking skills: Human resources managers rely on strong speaking skills to give presentations and direct their staff. They must clearly communicate information and instructions to their staff and other employees (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016, p.4).

Ferguson (2015) specifies other skills as essential requirements for Human Resources Managers. Risk Assessment is one of these skills since “things will unavoidably go wrong, but by spotting these problems as soon as possible, and having a clear understanding of how they will affect the company progress and its overall outcome can be invaluable (p.5).” Understanding the needs of others is another ability. It is “an effective way of avoiding conflict management, although conflicts are inevitable. A Human Resources Manager needs to be open minded and understand the disagreement between the affected parties, set up meetings to discuss each party’s viewpoints and ensure both parties can negotiate and agree to a solution which moves the project forward (p.6).” Ability to empathize is also a required skill since a Human Resources Manager needs to “make your voice heard but you also need to be able to listen respectfully. This demonstrates to others that you respect your team’s opinions and it will increase their commitment and enthusiasm to the project. It is important to give praise where it is due, otherwise your team may become discouraged and detached from their work. It is important to recognize your workers when they do something right as this motivates and pushes the team further (p.6).”

In the recruitment process of a Human Resources Professional, the industry is looking for “someone who is smart, understands that Human Resources is part of the management function, has business savvy and a keen analytical mind.” Like other areas of business, Human Resources

focuses on innovation and return on investment. Thus, Human Resources professional needs be creative, innovative thinkers. (U.S. News, 2016)

U.S. News (2016) emphasizes the importance of having good writing skills, being able to work with financial data, being updating with the applicable technology, and also having a solid understanding of the human resources business and of the company business. “Being in HR in a startup tech company is not the same as being in HR in a bank or a manufacturing company or in the entertainment industry. In order to be truly effective, human resources professional needs to show that he/she understand the business that he/she is in and how Human Resources can support the bottom line.

5. Salary / Work Conditions / Employment Opportunities

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016), the median annual wage for human resources managers was \$104,440 in May 2015. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$61,300, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$187,200.

Most human resources managers work full time during regular business hours. About 1 in 3 human resources managers worked more than 40 hours per week in 2014 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Jobs often include flexible hours and telecommuting, and involve collaborating with project teams and employees based outside the office. (U.S. News, 2016)

Employment of human resources managers is projected to grow 9 percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. Employment growth largely depends on the performance and growth of individual companies. As new companies form and organizations expand their operations, they will need more human resources managers to oversee and administer their programs. Human resources managers will also be needed to ensure that firms

adhere to changing and complex employment laws regarding occupational safety and health, equal employment opportunity, healthcare, wages, and retirement plans. For example, adoption of the Affordable Care Act may spur the need for more human resources managers, who can help to ensure that company policies are in compliance with regulations (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

Although job opportunities are expected to vary based on the staffing needs of individual companies, strong competition can be expected for most positions. Job opportunities should be good in the management of companies and enterprises industry as organizations continue to use outside firms to assist with some of their human resources functions. Candidates with certification or a master's degree—particularly those with a concentration in human resources management—should have the best job prospects. Those with a solid background and work experience in human resources programs, policies, and employment law should also have better job opportunities.

6. Special Topic: Impact of Technology on Labor Law

Today, technology constantly impacts our lives. Technology is a key business tool for many employers and for most employees, using electronic devices and social media is a daily ritual. Human Resources professionals have to be attentive on their responsibility of support the employer about the use of technology that could create a potential for wage and hour violations under the Fair Labor Standards Act and other applicable wage laws. Employees usually have a set schedule from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, emails and calls do not stop at 5:00 p.m. and employees frequently review and answer to these emails and calls when they are outside of their scheduled hours (Hearing & Patenaude, 2016).

Although employers are likely to argue that such “work” involves infrequent and insignificant periods of time and is, thus, not compensable, depending on the amount of time such employees expend on reviewing and responding to those emails and calls, such time could be compensable. To avoid some of the risks posed by employees working off-the-clock through the use of portable devices, employers should ensure that they maintain policies prohibiting employees from working hours outside of their assigned work schedule without authorization and ensure that such policies are enforced (Hearing & Patenaude, 2016, p. 58).

7. Interview Data

The researcher conducted an interview with a human resources professional to have some recommendations about how to entry in the market job of Human Resources. The respondent was very kind and more than pleased to tell me about her professional experience and give some advices and recommendations in order to interviewer find a job according her education, professional experience and expectations.

The interviewee has worked for more than 15 years as a Human Recources professional. Consequently, this professional had a realiable information and very good recommendations to researcher. She worked for big and small companies, on different areas of Human Resources. This fact made the professional qualified to give all necessary information to researcher.

The respondent explained to research that nowadays everything is “on line”. There many reliable jobs web site where the applicant to a job can upload his or her resume. Uploading it on specific professional social website – LinkedIn – could give to job’s applicant more possibilities to find a position according his or her education and experience.

In order to understanding what the organizations are looking for when they decide to hire a professional for a position of Human Resources, the researcher asked the respondent what is the most important qualifications for getting that job position. The respondent said that depend of the company. Some organizations value much more the education, including Master's degree. Others pay more attention to the previous experience in Human Resources area or some abilities that could indicate a high potential to that position.

The interviewee explained what are she consider to be very important factors which could impact for better on getting a Human Resources' position such as having a good GPA, certifications on human resources field, technological and computer abilities as well as analytical skills. Communication is another essential skill. Being bilingual could make the difference in some companies.

The respondent emphasized the a good Human Resources professional have to be able on dealing with changes, solving problems, working under pressure and essentially the professional have to love working and helping people. Those abilities could make the difference in the professional and the company's employees' life.

8. Conclusion

Working in Human Resources field in the United States looks very similar to working in Brazil. The activities have the same responsibilities and scope as well as the education and abilities requirements. All information that the researcher found from the sources are essential for having a potential successful career.

However, the most valuable information came from the respondent of the interview. The recommendations that were given by the interviewee will be the foundation to researcher go to

market job and find a position which the researcher could make the difference wherever the organization she will work for.

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