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Mampule Faith Lebone

4 September 2020

Signature

Date

GHRM 529 – Individual Assignment



TOPIC: Critically discuss human resource management functions and competencies of line managers.

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Executive Summary

For many years, businesses have had to make some cost reduction decisions, including passing on HR responsibilities to line managers. Businesses have noted the importance of human resource management as a tool to remain competitive with their peers in the business space and also keep employees satisfied without compromising on the strategic objective of the business.

Human Resource Management has since become a global trend and strategic tool in enhancing the image of the business – happy employees, happy customers results in healthy profits and therefore happy stakeholders.

Line managers need to assess their own capabilities in regards to performing their HR responsibilities successfully and if there is a gap that is realised, HR needs to step in a facilitate that process by looking for training for that relevant line manager.

Introduction

Human Resource Management is defined as a set of activities, often coordinated by the Human Resource department, with an extreme focus on the managing of employees at all levels of the business (Byars & Rue, 2006). Employees are known to be the human resource or human capital of the business and seen as a valuable asset – talented, valued employees will result in successful, competitive businesses.

Often this crucial function in the business is seen as an insignificant department that only deals with administrative and reactive tasks of an organization. For example, dealing with employee complaints and the hiring / firing of staff members. But over the years, this function is gained much more respect by business with understanding the importance of integrating this function into the DNA of the business.

As businesses adopt to more competitive growth strategies that emphasize innovation in their service offerings, this will then increase the demand for an adaptive, learning workforce – even amongst the low and semi-skilled employees – in order to absorb new skills and knowledge to perform certain tasks. One way of doing so, is by broadening the responsibilities of line managers to set performance-based tasks that will identify, assess and develop competences of their employees. This will enable the line managers to align

employees' performance with the business strategic goals. This needs to be an ongoing thing.

This document will investigate the human resources functions and competencies of line managers by looking into the devolution of Human Resource functions, the advantages & disadvantages, HR responsibilities and tasks of line managers and the competencies they need to implement Human Resource functions. I will also do a self-assessment in order to assess myself.

Literature Review

Devolution of HR functions to line managers

Human Resource devolution, which has been a growing global trend, is known as passing of certain tasks and responsibilities from Human Resource managers to line managers who don't directly work in a human resource department. This is to increase efficiency of the HR department and also help the business achieve its potential. The success of devolving HR is achieved by leveraging the close, working relationships between line managers and the employees that report to them. There has been a boom in giving line managers more responsibility for the management of their employees and also offload the extent at which HR departments limit line management in this specific category. Therefore, HR personnel would take on the role of support and facilitator to line managers and not control them.

Interestingly, "devolution" is a combination of evolution and devolve which translate to the HR function in a business evolving into a strategic partner while transferring certain HR functions to line managers.

Businesses are under constant pressures to adapt: from globalization, market competition, government deregulation, restructuring, consolidations and innovation. This means daily routine of management routine is not routine anymore, therefore a continuous focus is needed to introduce more effective and innovate management practices. Hence line managers need to be involved in the process of employee management by devolving HR responsibilities to them.

Advantages and disadvantages of the devolution of HR-related functions to line managers

HR departments are often accused of operating in “silos”, slow implementation processes and creating unpractical policies. Integrating Human Resource Management with business strategy could be an effective way to increase the image of human resource among line managers.

There is a positive relationship between integration and devolvment as Human Resource Management becomes more strategic with HR personnel spending less time on traditional tasks. One of the benefits of HR devolvment to line managers has been cost reduction as HR departments are becoming smaller.

Line managers are seen as vital in managing people and also address criticism of the HR department as sometimes HR managers lack the business knowledge and therefore their decisions are based on labour principles that are good in theory but not practical from a business perspective. Line managers are seen better equipped to implement HR polices because they are involved in the daily operations of the business.

Having line managers assume some HR responsibilities will enable faster decision-making that is line with the reality with the business without having to go through the slow, and often rigorous HR process. Line managers are between the strategic top and the operating core of the business, hence are able to influence strategic and operational priorities. Line managers work closer to employees and when they take on these HR responsibilities this can positively influence motivation levels of employees, commitment and overall performance. For example, line managers are supposed to set performance targets and assess them with HR facilitating and supporting that process.

Given the positives, there are also disadvantages to devolving HR responsibility to line managers. Line managers, as eager as they be, are ineffective in completing HR responsibilities and delivering value. A gap has been identified between the proposed and passed HR practices – proposed practices are designed by the organisation to

contribute to the achievement of the business strategy whereas passed practices are implemented which may differ from the intended plans. This could be due to line managers lacking adequate skills and knowledge, insufficient interest for staff management and a heavy workload. Therefore, line managers need to be given training and support from HR managers to avoid costly mistakes. Some HR managers may be concerned that they may lose control if responsibilities are handed down to other departments. The HR department has oversight over employee development and its influence on behaviour and policy could be lost too.

HR responsibilities and practices of line managers

Line managers play a critical role in ensuring that employees are motivated, productive and competent aligning behind the business strategy. HR devolvment is not a competition between the HR department and line managers but a partnership. Operational aspects of human resource management are dealt by line managers and strategic aspects remain with the HR department. Therefore, HR managers are responsible for activities that involve interactions with external stakeholders such as trade unions and activities that involve long-term planning. Line managers are responsible for day-to-day staff management activities such as coaching, performance management, promotions and disciplinary action.

Line managers should manage staffing in his/her department. Working together with HR, line managers should determine the skills and qualifications needed for seamless operation of the department functions. During the recruitment process, HR will advise line managers on how to identify qualified candidates. They also need to manage resources within their control such as staff times and finances. Schedule meetings with employees to discuss progress and any setbacks that could be improved.

They are also responsible for the training and development of their employees. Identify which training is needed and have HR facilitate the process. For example, a line manager may identify Excel training for an employee and HR would source the place for the training. Line managers will also be responsible for setting performance objective targets and rate employee performance.

When conflict arises, line managers will need to step in with the advice of the HR department on how to better resolve the source of conflict. Given the fact that the line managers work in closer proximity with employees, he may have a better chance in understanding the underlying source of the issue.

Competencies line managers need to implement HRM functions

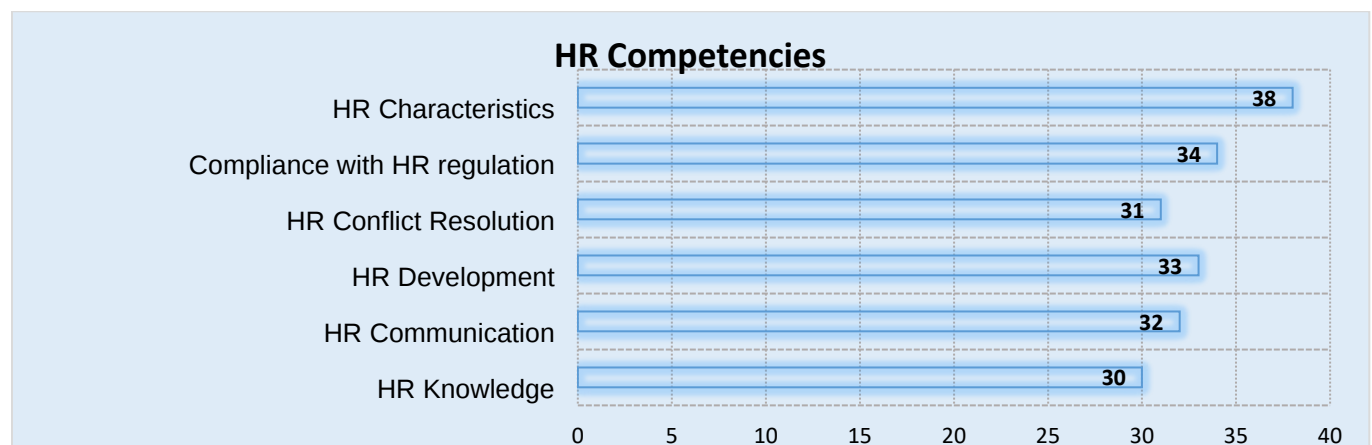
Although line managers may not have formal human resource training at an academic level, he/she needs to have acquired some form of skills to deal with employee management issues – including enhancement of soft skills. Training line managers will help build a competency base for line managers which they can utilise to perform their HR tasks successfully. I would suggest have these line managers do a short course that deals with aspects concerning human resource management to better understand the concept.

Line managers need to have skills involved in recruitment, performance management and effective communication. HR needs to support and ensure that line managers receive such training. Communication is a vital skill that line managers need – both oral and written communication.

Being a critical and analytical thinker is also important, together with leadership. Line managers need to exercise sound judgement to make huge-impact decisions and also need to direct activities of his/her department in order to influence a certain outcome that contributes to the business strategy.

Data analysis

Results



Discussion of results

Based on the above graph, I have strong HR characteristics with a strong need to effectively fulfill my HR-related roles and also implement it. However, HR knowledge is my weakest point and would need improvement. I don't know exactly what it expected of me and not knowledgeable about the legal aspect regarding implementing HR practices in my department.

Professional development plan

<u>Self-evaluation</u>	
<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weakness</u>
I'm eager to learn about HR-related matters even though I may have time constraints due to my workload. I am also an eager person, who takes initiative in dealing with HR matters in my department. I have a sense of duty to fulfill my role and it is of importance to me.	Unfortunately, I do not have a HR-related qualification and therefore there are some aspects that I am not knowledgeable about which tends to hinder me in successfully performing my tasks. Given that, I may have uncertainty in performing my tasks and therefore impacting my self-confidence as a line manager.
<u>Gap analysis</u>	
<u>Currents skills</u>	<u>Needed skills</u>
• Effective communication skills • Analytical thinker (even more reinforced with my day-to-day tasks for my job). • Good leader	• HR qualification • Soft skills such as conflict resolution • Time management • Priority setting (having to manage my workload and HR-matters related to my department)
<u>Action plans</u>	
• Allocate time to deal with HR-matters (such as grievances, coaching etc.) in my department by scheduling an hour a day in my diary. • Schedule a meeting with my HR partner to discuss the training needed to perform my tasks by offering suggestions on which course to do. • Finish a HR-related course over the next years and will be part-time and won't conflict with my daily operations at work. • Do an Emotional Intelligence training at work within the next 6 months. • Prioritize tasks daily when I get to work every morning using the priority matrix method. • Get an accountability mentor at work who will track my progress on the action steps.	
<u>Rewards and Benefits</u>	
• Schedule a team building trip with my employees every six months. • Have my supervisor / boss assess my progress by letting it be part of my performance objectives which will contribute to me getting a bigger bonus at work.	

Conclusion

Human resource management has been seen as the policy and compliance watchdog, with handling all the administrative work involved in hiring and firing employees. But now, HR department is seen as a crucial player ensuring that the business remains competitive by upskilling, recruiting and retaining their employees. At the end of the day, employees are the biggest and most important asset of any business.

There is no doubt about the key role that line managers play in the integration of human resource management into the business strategy. However, giving line managers more responsibility in terms of HR responsibilities requires constant evaluation. The HR department needs to assist the line managers by ensuring they have sufficient, adequate skills and knowledge to perform their HR obligations successfully.

Important to remember is that the relationship should not be the source of tension but rather be viewed as a partnership. It is not a trade-off for one over the other, both parties need to work closely with one another.

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