

## Human Resources

### Warm up:

- What do you think are the main responsibilities of someone who works in HR?
- What are some of the most difficult aspects of working in HR?
- What kind of qualities does a person need to be well-suited to a career in HR?
- Do you think the role of the HR department has changed in the last few decades?



### 1. Match the verb on the left to the word on the right to form common responsibilities of a HR department.

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| a. Mediating                   | 1. new employees                            |
| b. Organising and calculating  | 2. staff performance                        |
| c. Recruiting                  | 3. overall HR strategies                    |
| d. Assessing                   | 4. the payroll                              |
| e. Developing and implementing | 5. the gap between management and employees |
| f. Bridging                    | 6. disputes between staff members           |



### 2. A HR professional is being asked questions about their job. Read the answer and complete the question with one of the responsibilities from exercise 1.

a) How do you feel about .....

I actually enjoy the process of interviewing people, but everything else around the hiring process is quite boring. I have to read a hundred CVs and a hundred cover letters, and to be honest usually if you've read one cover letter you've read them all.

*What do you think a "cover letter" is?*

b) Do you enjoy .....

Not really, it can be really tricky sometimes. You need to talk to both parties and try not to judge too quickly. Last year we had an elderly employee who claimed her manager was bullying her because of her age. I have to admit I did not believe her at first, her manager seemed like a nice guy, but once we looked into it we realised she was right. He was fired the next day.

*What do you think "bullying" means?*

c) Are you ever involved in .....?

No, that's not really my area of expertise, it's my boss's. She has to look at how we approach human resources as a whole, and then puts that into action. I just follow orders.

*What do you think "area of expertise" means?*

d) Do you think part of working in HR is .....?

Yes, definitely. Our company is a bit old-fashioned, and so the sense of hierarchy is a lot stronger. The executives don't really mix with the standard team members. This has some advantages, but it can also lead to a bit of a disconnect between the bosses and the staff. It's part of our job to help avoid communication breakdowns.

*What do you think "hierarchy" means?*

e) How much time do you spend.....?

Oh man, this takes much more time and effort than you might think. Everybody thinks it's just as simple as hitting a button and sending out the salaries, but the truth is it gets very complicated. You have to calculate tax, track overtime, and above all else make sure everybody gets paid on time!

*What do you think "overtime" means?*

f) How do you go about .....?

Well, we have a form that we ask all the team leaders to fill out every month about every team member in their team. This helps us to keep track of how each employee is doing. On top of that there are several metrics we track such as productivity, number sick days, and number of sales to evaluate them.

*What do you think "keep track of" means?*



3. What do you think the image below means? Do you think it's true?





4. Below is a list of common problems that a HR department may have to deal with. Read through them with a partner and come up with some possible solutions to the problems. Use some of the phrases in the box to help you make suggestions.

We should...	It might be a good idea to...	I think we'd better...
I think the best solution would be to....	We could try....	Why don't we.....?
Well obviously we should...	What we could do is.....	How about...?

- The R and D department is understaffed.
- A lot of the staff are taking too much sick leave.
- Many interns are dissatisfied, claiming they are not learning much, even though they are working for free.
- The company has very high staff turnover.
- The job advertisements are getting very few responses.
- Many of the female employees feel the company has a glass ceiling.
- One team is not getting a long well, with several members threatening to resign if they aren't moved into a new team.
- The payroll program is extremely buggy, resulting in some employees being underpaid.
- Multiple staff members have complained about one team leader, saying he gives them basically no guidance.



5. James has worked for Aerofleet for 10 years, and in that time he's had 3 meetings with Sarah, a HR manager. Listen to the meetings and answer the questions.

#### Job Interview

- Where did Sarah and James first meet?
- How did James "get his foot in the door" at Aerofleet?
- What is the difference between James' current job and the job he is applying for?
- What experience does James have in managing people? Why is this not on his C.V?
- Would you consider hiring James to be a manager in this situation? Why or why not?
- James says "Just between you and me, he doesn't have enough time." What do you think "just between you and me" means?

### Performance Evaluation

- a) Why does James feel nervous?
- b) What is the main area James feels like he could improve in?
- c) What bad news did James have to give to his team?
- d) Who is Marcus, and what do you think his relationship is with James?
- e) Do you think James got the job he applied for in the job interview section?
- f) Sarah says “I was under the impression that you wanted this job specifically for the social contact” What do you think “I was under the impression that” means?

### Employee complaint

- a) Who is Andy Richter?
- b) Why did James accept the position of assistant manager?
- c) What happened to Marcus?
- d) What is James’ complaint?
- e) What solution does Sarah offer to James? Do you think she handled the situation well?
- f) Sarah says “It’s a great way to get a better overview of the company, not to mention rubbing shoulders with some of the bosses” What do you think “rubbing shoulders” means?



### 6. Role play any of the 3 situations below with a partner

HR	Employee
Student A: You are interviewing an assistant manager of a sales team who wants to be promoted to manager. Think of at least 3 questions to ask them.	Student B: You are an assistant manager who wants to be promoted to manager. Think of at least 3 reasons why you would be a good fit for this role.
Student A: You are having a performance assessment with a sales representative. The employee consistently meets their KPIs, but often misses team meetings.	Student B: You are one of the top sellers in a team of sales representatives. You feel like there are too many meetings, and they are not focussed enough, wasting valuable time.
Student A: You are talking to a team leader because 3 of his team have complained that he is too aggressive. Try to convince him to “tone it down” in the future.	Student B: You are a team leader who believes the best way to get results is to push your team hard. You give feedback in an extremely blunt manner.