

HRBS White Paper

The Most Common Mistakes HR Managers Make

Tina Radford, Managing Director of HR Business Solutions investigates the most common mistakes made by HR Managers.

Not all companies have the luxury of having an in-house HR function to service the needs of its employees and Managers. Many small business owners make do with their own knowledge or outsource to external HR consultancies. When a company expands to about 100 – 150 employees this is the time that the ‘people management’ and HR compliance and administration workload usually becomes too much for the line managers to carry and when CEO’s consider recruiting for an in-house HR Manager.

Many CEO’s I come into contact with are reluctant to set up an in-house HR function for a range of reasons. Some CEO’s merely do not see the value in HR and have had poor experiences in the past while others don’t really understand what we do and can’t justify putting a price tag to the ‘warm and fuzzy’ stuff.

I recently conducted a HR forum where we discussed the most common mistakes HR Managers make. I received feedback from both CEO’s and HR practitioners alike and in a nutshell it looks like this:

- Not getting their hands dirty and working ‘in’ the business before trying to work ‘on the business;
- Lack of business understanding in terms of how the business makes money
- Driving a HR agenda and not supporting the business agenda
- Inability to build strong relationships with key stakeholders before initiating change in the business
- Getting to caught up fighting fires in the day to day operational people issues
- Some HR practitioners fall into the trap of over representing employees and behaving like a unofficial ‘union rep’ when presenting issues to management;
- Not understanding who HR works for in the business, is it the employee or employer ?
- HR people can be too theoretical and idealistic and sometimes need to adopt a more pragmatic and realistic approach to solving people issues;
- HR people often do not talk the same language as the CEO
- HR people need to put the PR in the HR and promote the organisation as an employer of choice
- HR needs to find ways to measure its contribution to the business with hard and fast KPI’s

After 16 years in the HR profession, I have seen little improvement in HR’s struggle to gain credibility and earn a seat at the boardroom table. It is a topic close to my heart that I am passionate about and discuss again in future blogs. However, I would be interested to hear your views in relation to how HR is perceived in the corporate world?

