

Insight of Interview

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A young leader in the area of Human Resource Management and a role model to young Human Resource Professionals, shared how Dominion University conquered the excellence in academics He revealed that his transition from manufacturing sector to academics is an insightful journey and the way he is leading the Human Resource Department it is an inspiration for many Human Resource Professionals.

1. What is the structure of HR function within your college? How did that affect your day-to-day responsibilities and enjoyment of the job?

In my college, the HR function is responsible for various tasks related to staffing, employee relations, benefits administration, training, and compliance with employment laws. The structure of the HR department can vary widely, depending on the size of the college and its organizational hierarchy.

A typical structure might include:

HR Director/Manager: Oversees the entire HR function, sets strategies, and manages the HR team.

Recruitment and Selection: Handles hiring processes, job postings, interviews, and on boarding.

Employee Relations: Deals with conflict resolution, employee grievances, and fostering a positive work environment.

Benefits and Compensation: Manages employee benefits, payroll, and compensation structures.

Training and Development: Organizes training programs, skill development initiatives, and career advancement opportunities.

Compliance and Legal Affairs: Ensures the college complies with labor laws, regulations, and internal policies.

The structure and efficiency of the HR function can significantly impact employees' experiences within the college:

Recruitment and On boarding: A well-organized HR department can streamline hiring processes, making it smoother for new employees to join and contribute quickly.

Employee Relations: An effective HR team can facilitate positive interactions between faculty, staff, and administrators, contributing to a healthy work environment.

Benefits and Compensation: Proper management of benefits and fair compensation can contribute to employee satisfaction and retention.

Training and Development: Access to quality training and development opportunities can enhance employees' skills and career growth.

Compliance: Ensuring compliance with laws and policies minimizes risks and creates a fair and secure workplace for everyone.

If the HR function is well-structured and efficiently managed, it can enhance job satisfaction by providing necessary support, guidance, and resources for employees. Conversely, if there are inefficiencies or shortcomings in HR processes, it could lead to frustration, delays, or misunderstandings, impacting the overall enjoyment of the job for employees

1. Which is the best Human Resource Management System according to you? And what are the challenges in its Implementation?

Choosing the "best" Human Resource Management System (HRMS) depends on the specific needs, size, and complexity of an organization. Several HRMS platforms have gained popularity for different reasons, including Oracle HCM Cloud, SAP Success Factors, Workday, Bamboo HR, ADP Workforce Now, and many others. Each system offers unique features, integrations, and functionalities catering to diverse organizational requirements.

However, challenges in implementing an HRMS often transcend the choice of a specific system and can include:

Customization: Aligning the HRMS with the organization's unique processes and

workflows can be complex. Customizations might be needed to fit specific needs, which can increase implementation time and costs.

Data Migration: Transferring data from legacy systems to the new HRMS accurately and securely without losing critical information poses a significant challenge.

Integration: Ensuring seamless integration with existing systems (like payroll, accounting, or CRM software) is crucial for smooth operations.

Training and Change Management: Introducing a new HRMS requires training for HR staff and employees. Resistance to change might affect user adoption and the system's effectiveness.

Costs and Budget: Implementation costs, licensing fees, ongoing maintenance, and support expenses can sometimes surpass initial estimates, affecting the overall budget.

Security and Compliance: Ensuring data security and compliance with privacy regulations (such as GDPR or HIPAA) is paramount. Implementing robust security measures within the HRMS is crucial.

Scalability: The system should be scalable to accommodate the organization's growth and changing needs without requiring a complete overhaul.

Vendor Support and Reliability: Reliance on a vendor for support and updates can be challenging if the vendor's services or support are not up to par.

User Experience and Adaptability: The system should be user-friendly and adaptable to the organization's evolving needs to ensure optimal utilization by employees and HR personnel.

Ultimately, the "best" HRMS is one that aligns with the organization's specific requirements, offers necessary features, provides reliable support, and can be effectively implemented within the allocated budget and timeline. A thorough assessment of needs, careful planning, robust change management, and post-implementation evaluation are crucial for successful HRMS implementation.

2. How do you define employment laws? Also discuss a few benchmarks for the same.

Employment laws encompass the legal regulations and statutes that govern the relationship between employers and employees. These laws set out the rights and responsibilities of both parties, covering various aspects of employment, such as wages, working conditions, discrimination, benefits, health and safety, termination, and more.

Several benchmarks exist within employment laws that serve as crucial guidelines and standards for ensuring fair and lawful treatment in the workplace:

Minimum Wage Laws: These laws establish the minimum hourly wage that employers must pay to their employees. Benchmarks vary by region or country and may differ based on factors like age and industry.

Anti-Discrimination Laws: Laws prohibit discrimination based on various factors such as race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and more. They ensure equal opportunities and fair treatment for all employees.

Work Hours and Overtime: Employment laws often define the standard work hours per week and criteria for overtime pay. Benchmarks commonly include a standard

40-hour workweek and overtime pay for additional hours worked.

Health and Safety Regulations: Laws mandate that employers provide a safe and healthy work environment. They specify requirements for workplace safety measures, training, and protocols to prevent accidents and ensure employee well-being.

Family and Medical Leave: These laws provide guidelines for employees to take unpaid leave for specific family or medical reasons, such as childbirth, adoption, or caring for a sick family member. Benchmarks might include the duration of leave and job protection.

Employee Benefits: Laws may require employers to offer certain benefits like healthcare, retirement plans, or disability insurance. Benchmarks might involve minimum coverage, eligibility criteria, and contribution requirements.

Worker Classification: Employment laws distinguish between employees and independent contractors, outlining criteria for each classification. This includes benchmarks related to control, independence, and nature of work.

Termination and Severance: Laws specify conditions and procedures for terminating employees, including notice periods, severance pay, and reasons for termination.

Privacy and Data Protection: Laws govern the collection, storage, and use of employee information, ensuring privacy rights and protection of sensitive data.

These benchmarks serve as fundamental guidelines within employment laws, but specific regulations can vary significantly between countries, states, or regions. Staying updated with these benchmarks and ensuring compliance is essential for employers to maintain a lawful and fair

working environment while avoiding legal repercussions.

3. Which initiatives would you suggest to enhance diversity and inclusion when hiring, developing succession planning and forming management practices?

Enhancing diversity and inclusion requires deliberate efforts across various stages of the employment lifecycle, including hiring, succession planning, and management practices. Here are initiatives that can foster diversity and inclusion at each stage:

Hiring:

Diverse Sourcing: Actively seek candidates from diverse backgrounds by using diverse job boards, partnering with minority-focused organizations, and expanding recruitment networks.

Unbiased Job Descriptions: Use inclusive language and focus on skills and qualifications rather than gender-specific or culturally biased terms to attract a broader range of candidates.

Blind Recruitment: Implement blind recruitment strategies where personal information (such as name, gender, or ethnicity) is removed from initial application materials to minimize unconscious biases.

Diverse Interview Panels: Create diverse interview panels to ensure multiple perspectives in candidate evaluation, reducing bias in the selection process.

Training and Education: Provide training to hiring managers and teams on unconscious bias, diversity, and inclusion to create awareness and foster a more inclusive hiring process.

Succession Planning:

Diverse Talent Pipeline: Identify and nurture a diverse pool of high-potential

employees for leadership roles through mentoring, development programs, and targeted opportunities.

Inclusive Leadership Development: Offer leadership development programs that emphasize inclusive leadership traits and skills, promoting a culture of inclusivity from the top down.

Merit-Based Advancement: Ensure promotion and advancement decisions are based on merit and potential, not solely on tenure or subjective biases.

Management Practices:

Inclusive Policies: Review and revise policies to ensure they promote diversity and inclusion, such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and anti-discrimination measures.

Diversity Training for Managers: Provide ongoing training to managers on fostering inclusivity, managing diverse teams effectively, and addressing biases in decision-making.

Diverse Task Force or Committees: Establish committees or task forces focused on diversity and inclusion to gather insights, implement strategies, and drive initiatives at all levels of the organization.

Open Communication Channels: Encourage open dialogue about diversity and inclusion in the workplace, creating forums for discussions, feedback, and idea-sharing.

Recognition and Rewards: Recognize and reward inclusive behaviors and contributions, fostering a culture where diversity and inclusion efforts are valued and celebrated.

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Support and encourage ERGs that represent various demographics within the

organization to provide a platform for networking, support, and advocacy.

These initiatives should be integrated into the organizational culture and supported by leadership commitment to create a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace. Regular evaluation and adjustment of these initiatives based on feedback and results are crucial for their effectiveness and long-term success.

4. At last, How challenging it is to work as Head of Human Resources in an Academic Institution?

Working as the Head of Human Resources in an academic institution presents unique challenges compared to other industries:

Balancing Academic and Administrative Needs

Faculty Dynamics: Managing diverse faculty members with varying expertise, academic freedom, and tenure considerations can be complex. Balancing their needs with administrative requirements is crucial.

Educational Mission: Aligning HR strategies with the institution's educational mission while ensuring compliance with academic standards and regulations can be challenging.

Unique HR Requirements

Student-Centric Approach: Understanding and addressing the unique HR needs of students, including support services, student employment, and student-worker regulations.

Seasonal Nature: Handling cyclical employment patterns tied to academic calendars, including hiring for different semesters, breaks, and managing temporary positions.

Navigating Regulatory Compliance

Education-Specific Regulations:

Complying with education-specific laws and regulations, such as FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), Title IX, and academic tenure policies.

Government Funding: Managing HR practices compliant with regulations tied to government funding and grants allocated for educational purposes.

Faculty and Staff Development

Continuous Learning: Supporting professional development for both faculty and staff, balancing academic growth and administrative skills enhancement.

Retaining Talent: Retaining top academic talent amid competitive environments where faculty may be recruited by other institutions offering better academic resources or opportunities.

Collaboration and Communication

Interdepartmental Collaboration: Coordinating HR efforts with various departments, faculties, and academic units to align HR strategies with educational goals.

Effective Communication: Communicating HR policies, procedures, and changes effectively across a diverse academic community with varying communication preferences.

Budget Constraints and Resource Allocation

Budget Limitations: Dealing with budget constraints while aiming to provide competitive compensation, benefits, and resources to attract and retain top academic and administrative talent.

Resource Allocation: Optimizing resources to meet HR needs while maintaining academic excellence and support services for students and staff.

Nuanced Understanding of Academic Environment:

Faculty Dynamics: Understanding the unique needs and motivations of faculty members, considering academic freedom, tenure, research, and teaching requirements.

Educational Mission Alignment: Aligning HR strategies with the institution's educational goals, ensuring that policies and practices complement academic endeavors.

Seasonal Hiring Cycles: Managing workforce fluctuations based on academic calendars, including hiring for semesters, breaks, and temporary positions.

Academic Policies and Regulations: Navigating complex academic regulations such as tenure processes, FERPA, Title IX, and compliance with industry-specific accreditation standards.

Importance of Student-Centered Approach:

Support Services: Designing HR initiatives that prioritize student support services, recognizing the direct impact of a well-supported staff on student success.

Student Employment: Overseeing employment opportunities for students, ensuring compliance with regulations and offering developmental opportunities.

Cultural Contribution: Fostering a culture where faculty and staff recognize the direct influence they have on students' academic experiences and well-being.

Retention of Top Talent: Creating an environment that attracts and retains top talent by emphasizing the institution's commitment to student growth and success.

Collaborative Approach:

Interdepartmental Collaboration:

Partnering with academic departments, faculty, and student services to ensure HR policies and practices align with academic excellence and student needs.

Communication Strategies: Developing communication strategies that resonate with diverse stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and administration, ensuring everyone feels heard and valued.

Continuous Learning and Development:

Professional Growth for Faculty and Staff: Encouraging ongoing learning opportunities for faculty and staff to enhance their teaching and administrative capabilities.

Student-Centered Professional Development: Prioritizing initiatives that directly impact student experiences, such as faculty training on effective teaching methods or staff development for better student support services.

In essence, a Head of HR in an academic institution must intricately balance the institution's educational goals, faculty requirements, and student needs. This demands a nuanced understanding of academic intricacies while maintaining a strong focus on cultivating an environment that nurtures student success.

Conclusion:

Being the Head of HR in an academic institution requires a nuanced understanding of the academic environment, a student-centered approach, and the ability to balance administrative and educational priorities. Successfully navigating these challenges involves a blend of HR expertise, adaptability, collaboration, and a deep appreciation for the unique aspects of academia.

Absolutely, the role of Head of HR in an academic institution demands a distinctive approach due to the environment's academic focus and the institution's student-centered mission. Here's why a

nuanced understanding and a student-centered approach are essential:

“Tough times don't last, tough people do” — Robert Schuller