

2013-2014 HCMS Scholarship

Question:

What can be done to secure the future for HR practitioners by taking into account such important factors like change, sustainability and growth?

1st Runner Up

Ms Kuo Ting Ting

City University of Hong Kong

To secure the future for HR practitioners, certain important factors must be taken into account, such as change, sustainability and growth. In general, I think that all these factors are related to how to increase recognition and employers' awareness of the importance of Human Resources Management (HRM) and to ensure the level of professionalism of HR practitioners. I know that Human Capital Management Society has already put much effort on promoting and developing HR professionals in Hong Kong and hence results in the increase in popularity of HRM in Hong Kong. Still, I think that something more can be done in terms of change, sustainability and growth. In this paper, suggestions would be made according to these three factors and will be mentioned one by one in the following sections.

Change

For the change factors, due to the highly dynamic business environment nowadays, there are always different internal and external forces which influence the operation of an organization. As a result, change becomes critical for the survival of most of the organizations. Therefore, as HR practitioner, it is essential to have the ability to apply change and also adapt to change. With reference to the application of change, in most of the organizations, HR

practitioners are always responsible to act as the change executors. For both incremental and transformational changes, HR practitioners need to apply different skills and tactics according to different situations, such as communicating the change to employees, responding to resistance to change from employees and implementing the change, so as to execute the change successfully. For example, if an organization wants to implement a new performance appraisal system, before implementation, HR practitioners need to analyze and evaluate different kinds of information and prepare the most appropriate way to carry out the change. In this case, employees may resist to change because they are not comfortable with uncertainty and lack of conviction that change is needed. In response to these reasons, resistance can be minimized by communication and education, which inform people the rationale of why change is necessary, what the details of change are, and what would happen after change is implemented. Besides, HR practitioners need to consider the needs and concerns of employees and respond to them. By doing these, resistance can be greatly reduced and can favor the change to be implemented more successfully. Hence, knowledge of how to manage change must be included in the HR professional courses and examinations to make sure that they can get these kinds of important knowledge.

For the adaptation of change, as mentioned, the current dynamic business environment would require HR practitioners to change. One example is the way of training. HR practitioners may use traditional methods such as face to face classroom training and on-the-job training in the past. Nevertheless, these methods are no longer sufficient to satisfy both the trainees and organizations. HR practitioners may need to use some technology based methods, like e-learning, social media, virtual reality, etc. If they just stick on their old way to train people and unable to adapt this change, they would probably be eliminated.

Sustainability

To maintain sustainability, it is crucial to ensure the quality of professionalism of HR practitioners. In the past, as there lacks a uniform qualification mechanism, the professionalism of HR practitioners varies and is unstable. This results in low recognition level of HR professional in Hong Kong. In general, I suggest that the situation can be improved through implementing a widely and globally recognized qualification and professional membership system. The level of professionalism can depend on the number of papers that

the HR practitioners passed in professional examinations. Every HR practitioner is required to attend a series of specific courses and pass a number of examinations to reflect their knowledge in HRM. The examination is suggested to be divided into different level, for example, level one to level eight. For levels one to four, they may relate to some general HRM knowledge. For levels five to eight, they would be more specialized in different HR functional areas, such as training and development, employee relationships, compensation and benefit, etc. HR practitioners are allowed to choose their preferred functional area to be examined. After accomplishing all the eight levels, they will be awarded with the HR profession membership. Just similar to the concept of Six Sigma, the membership would also be separated into several elite ranking which depends on the solid working experience and practical application of knowledge in reality. Furthermore, the different in membership ranking should also be able to reflect the value of the entire HR practitioners, especially in the eyes of employers. This is crucial in securing the future of HR practitioners. Therefore, the mechanism for examining, approving and upgrading the membership must be strictly designed and operated in order to ensure the credibility and recognition of this new system.

Being awarded with the professional membership is not the end point, instead, it is just the start of a new journey. HR practitioners need to keep improving and equipping themselves. Consequently, in order to encourage their lifelong learning in the HR field, annual renewal of professional membership would require members to attain HR related courses for certain number of hours, to ensure that they get the latest information about their professional areas and keep continuous learning. It is because only those who keep growing and adapting to change can be sustainable in this dynamic world. Besides, additional supports should be provided. For those professional members, periodic seminars, exhibition conference should be arranged for informing members the latest HR news and information. These activities can serve as invaluable opportunities for HR practitioners to exchange and share their experience among each other.

Growth

Growth concerns both the whole community of HR professionals and personal growth of HR individual practitioners. The pie of HR industry must be enlarged in order to accommodate more HR practitioners because people would only be motivated to improve and grow when there are sufficient job and development

opportunities. Actually, because of the effort made by different HR associations such as Human Capital Management Society, the recognition of importance of HRM has been greatly increased in the previous 15 to 20 years. When compare to the past, the function of HRM has been transformed from simply administrative to being the strategic planner and advisor to an organization. As a result, most sizable organizations and even many of the Small and Medium Enterprise have developed their own HR department responsible for efficient attracting, developing, retaining, allocating and making use of the valuable Human Resources. Nevertheless, continuous effort is still needed to put on introducing and promoting the importance of HRM in order to increase the public awareness and recognition, so that employers are willing to put more resources in HRM. In consequence, this can lead to the increase in the size of the whole pie of HR industry and more capacity would be available for HR practitioners. As mentioned, once there are ample opportunities available, they would be motivated to focus on the growth in their professionalism. When they keep growing and developing, their degree of professionalism would be increased which allow HR practitioners to perform more efficiently and effectively in their specialized area and help organizations to achieve their business goal. It is a kind of virtuous circle which creates a win-win situation for both employers and HR practitioners.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although much effort had already been made in promoting and developing HR by Human Capital Management Society, as the role of HR becomes more important, continuous effort on securing the future of HR practitioners is still needed. It is because only when there are plenty of development and job opportunities in HR field, talents would be attracted and retained in working as HR professionals. It is beneficial to both employers and the entire body of HR in market. In this paper, I have made some suggestions in terms of change, sustainability and growth in related to this purpose. These recommendations aim at increasing the recognition of HR professionalism and importance and also the quality of HR practitioners. I sincerely look forward to see the fruitful future of every HR practitioners and hope to work as one of them in the near future.