

---

## 1B The Role of HR in Business

Traditionally, the role of the Human Resource professional in many companies has been closely aligned with personnel and administration functions that were viewed by the company as paperwork. In many companies, the HR function came out of the administration or finance department because hiring employees, paying employees, and dealing with benefits were the primary needs of the company. Often employees believed that the HR function was in place solely to serve management.

In light of the ever changing and more complex environment, the role of HR professionals has been evolved to meet the needs of their changing company. Successful companies are becoming more adaptive, resilient, more responsive to change and customer-focused. Within this environment, the HR professional is a strategic business partner, a subject matter expertise, an employee advocate and a change agent.

### a. Strategic Business Partners

In this role, the HR person contributes to the development of and the accomplishment of the company-wide business plan and objectives.

The HR business objectives are established to drive and support the attainment of the overall strategic business plan and objectives. HR is responsible for turning this future business plan into future work force capabilities and management practices such that the business results can be achieved.

This impacts all dimensions of the HR services such as the design of work positions; sourcing and staffing; reward and recognition; performance management and appraisal systems; employee learning and development; employee engagement; talent management and succession planning. When HR professionals are aligned with the business, the human component of the company will be viewed as a strategic contributor to business success.

To be a successful strategic business partner, HR should possess business knowledge, understand the cost implications of people-related initiatives, and be accountable for and responsible for measurement and cost containment of all HR programs and processes.

### b. Subject Matter Expert

In this role, the HR person should possess sound HR knowledge in relation to the most up-to-date employment law and the best HR practices for sourcing and staffing, remuneration strategy and systems, performance management, employee relations, and people development, and advise business as appropriate.

At all times, a professional HR will keep their management informed of any potential risk and liability to the business due to the change of employment law.

---

c. Employee Advocate

As an employee advocate, HR creates and fosters a work environment in which people are motivated, engaged, contributing and happy at work. The HR professional helps establish and promotes the organizational culture in which people are willing to demonstrate the competency required to perform the job, and commit to address customers' needs and concerns.

In this role, the HR person identifies and facilitates overall talent management strategies, employee development opportunities, employee assistance programs, long term incentive and retention strategies, and effective communication opportunities and channels between management and employees.

d. Change Agent

Knowing how to link changes to the strategic needs of the organization and being able to show empathy and address employee concerns will minimize employee dissatisfaction and resistance to change. This requires the HR professional to have both the knowledge about and the ability to execute successful change strategies.