

Equip to Drive the Change- HRM in Digital ERA

Rajiv Subramoniam .R¹ & Chitra .K²

¹Assistant Manager-HR, Loyal Textile Mills Ltd, Kovilpatti.

²Assistant Professor ,S T Hindu College, Nagercoil.

ABSTRACT

We are currently living in the dynamic digital era. Changes are inevitable and as a result continuous learning has become art of survival in today's business scenario. Computers, which once helped mankind by doing data processing and documentation has now become so powerful and dominant that it has gone to the extent of creating controls and restrictions in the form of automation and systemization. This huge leap in technological advancement, by its perfectness and accuracy has always been a threat to human employability in different job segments and Human Resources Department is also not an exception to it. Contemporarily, to exist in this survival of the fittest scenario, the Human Resources department is trying to change its outlook from a cost incurring department to a profit center by playing the role of the Human Resource business partner. While most of the HR professionals in the creamy layer of the management are aware of this scenario and are trying to strategically redesign their team beneath them, the level of awareness of the scenario of their team members becomes debatable. In this empirical research paper, 67 working Human Resource professionals participated in the survey, in which their level of understanding the role of Human Resource professional as a business partner, the need for HR business professional in today's context, the perception of their team members towards the same scenario and suggestions for addressing the gaps.

Keywords-HR (Human Resources), HRM (Human Resource Management), Business partner (BP), Human Resource Business Partner (HRBP)

I. INTRODUCTION

HR department, the only department with a "Personnel" touch, in any organization acts as a lubricating agent between the employer and the employee in meeting their respective expectations, thereby creating a win-win situation for both the sides. The HR department acts as a doorstep for any employee who enters the organization, being the first point of contact right from the recruitment process, induct them and on-board them to the organization, upgrade them to meet the business demands by arranging periodic training program, make them feel engaged in their workplace by conducting engagement programs and takes care of their compensation benefits too. Other than these lucrative-like-look works, there are also some sensitive jobs like attrition management, salary processing, driving the performance Management system, maintaining interoffice relationship and interpreting employment laws which are directly linked to the performance and image of the organization.

Brian Walker in one of his articles expresses the complexity of HRD that, it will be easy to design airplanes that won't fall out of the sky at any cause than managing HR.

Operational human resources personnel are the key players who perform end to end HRM function for the effective running of business and pave the way to achieve the vision of the HR department as well as the organization. An Operational HR provides support to all the employees and

satisfy all the day to day essential needs of the employees and internal process of the HR system for the smooth functioning of business.

Evolution of HRM in Different ERAS

The first role of the century saw an apprehension for developed competence by careful strategy of effort. During the middle role of the century importance shifted to the worker’s efficiency. Current decades have viewed on improved apprehension for the quality of working life, total quality management and worker’s participation in management.

Personnel aspect is apprehensive with manpower planning , recruitment , assortment ,placement , transmission, promotion , training and growth , layoff and retirement , payment , inducements , efficiency etc.

Welfare aspect deals with working conditions and amenities such as canteens, rest and lunch rooms, housing, transport, medical assistance, education, health and security, regeneration services etc.

Industrial relations aspect covers union-management relation, combined discussion, collective bargaining, grievance and disciplinary events, settlement of arguments, etc.

**Table No 1
Different ERAs of HRM and approaches followed**

Different Eras of HRM-starting from the order of origin	Approaches Followed
Industrial Revolution Era (1750’s-1900’s)	Replacement of human efforts by machineries
Social Responsibility Era (1900’s)	Adaptation of humanistic and paternalistic approach
Trade Unionism Era (1926)	State intervention to protect the workers interest was felt necessary
Scientific Management Era (1880’s- 1950’s)	Methodical study of work approaches in order to increase productivity
Human Relations Era (1930’s)	Workers attitudes are associated with productivity
Behavioral Science Era (1950’s)	Applying conceptual and analytical tools to the problem of understanding and predicting behavior in workplace
System Approach Era (Late 1950’s)	Understanding the organization as an open system that transforms inputs into outputs while in constant interaction with its environment.
Contingency Approach Era (1960’s)	Applying management principles and processes as dictated by the unique characteristics of each situation

It can be seen evident that HRM has seen a drastic shift in its approaches and functions from the Industrial Revolution era to the present contingency approach era. In the growing organizational needs of the digital era HRM and its approaches will strive to continuously evolve and tend to satisfy the same.

HR Business Partner

The word ‘partner’ comes from the word ‘part’. Generically partner means someone, who is in a part of something, in a relationship sharing a common life or set of objectives. Business partnering is not a job title, but it defines the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the individuals.

There are 6 big shifts that differentiate and proves the existence and need of HR as business partner in the current business scenario.

Transferring capability Vs Solving the problem

It's very important to build Operational HR managers capability in handling routine people concerns and hence the ability to train, mentor and coach Operational HR managers is a key skill HRBP needs to develop.

Special Skills & Varied role playing Vs Specialists

In the current Volatile-Uncertain-Complex and Ambiguous business world organizations are prone to changes frequently and adapting according to the change is required immediately. Hence HRBPs are expected to be with special skills and not specialist in talent management and worker relations. These special skills may include, extreme awareness towards cultural nuances, external and internal communication savviness, drawing insights from business and people data and analytics.

Conscious-keeper Vs Collaborator

HRBPs needs to differentiate themselves from Operational HRs and HR generalists by playing the role of a consultant and Orchestrator of solutions.

Talent Management Vs Managing Resource Supply

While it's not that easy being a HR professional and not being part of the recruitment process. What differs HRBPs from the rest of the HR professionals is the way they manage the talents. They also need to look at the talent management process from a view of supply chain management, either it be external recruiting or internal recruiting for succession planning process.

Hence, HRBPs walk a tightrope balancing the external environment and not forgoing any organizational needs and goals.

Data Collection

Convenience sampling method was adopted for this empirical research, 67 working HR professions in our networking circle participated in this data collection. Questionnaires were circulated through mail and LinkedIn messages. Out of this 67 HR professionals, 29 HR Professionals belonged to the creamy layer of the management, ie General Manager HR and above cadres and 38 belong to the non-creamy layer of the management, ie Senior Manager and below. The segregation as creamy and non-creamy layer was done for the convenience of data analysis.

Data Analysis

Of the 67 HR professionals who participated in this survey,

- 29 respondents (56.7%) belong to the creamy layer of the HR department.
- 38 respondents (43.2%) belong to the non-creamy layer of the HR department.

Other than the demographic details, the respondents were asked to respond to the following 5 questions during the data collection process.

Q1) Are you familiar with the concept of HR Business partnering? (given a small briefing about what is meant by HR business partnering)

- All the 100% respondents, who belong to the creamy layer of the HR department have responded that they are familiar with the concept of HR business partnering.
- With respect to the respondents, who belongs to the non creamy layer of the HR department, 84.2% have responded they are familiar with the concept of HR business partnering and remaining 15.7% have responded the other way around.

Q2) In the current ever changing business scenario, is HRBP required in an organization?

- 26 out of 29 (90%) respondents in the creamy layer of the management of the creamy layer HR professionals emphasize the need for HRBPs in the organization, as they have responded agree and strongly agree for the question. Only 3 (10%) have responded disagree for the need of HRBPs in the organization.
- 60% respondents of the non-creamy layer has expressed their view as need of HRBPs in the organization as they have responded strongly agree and agree, 5% of the respondents have responded with no opinion, 35% have responded disagree and strongly disagree for the same.

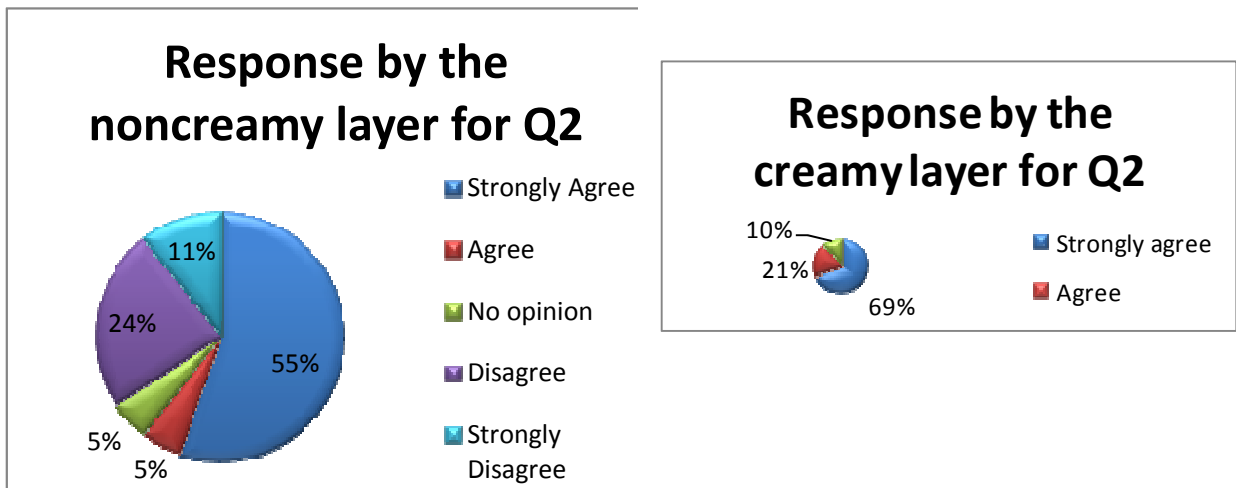


Figure 1-Diagrammatic representation of responses obtained from the HR professionals for Q2

Q3)Whom do you think best fit in case of a recruitment for HRBP in the organization?

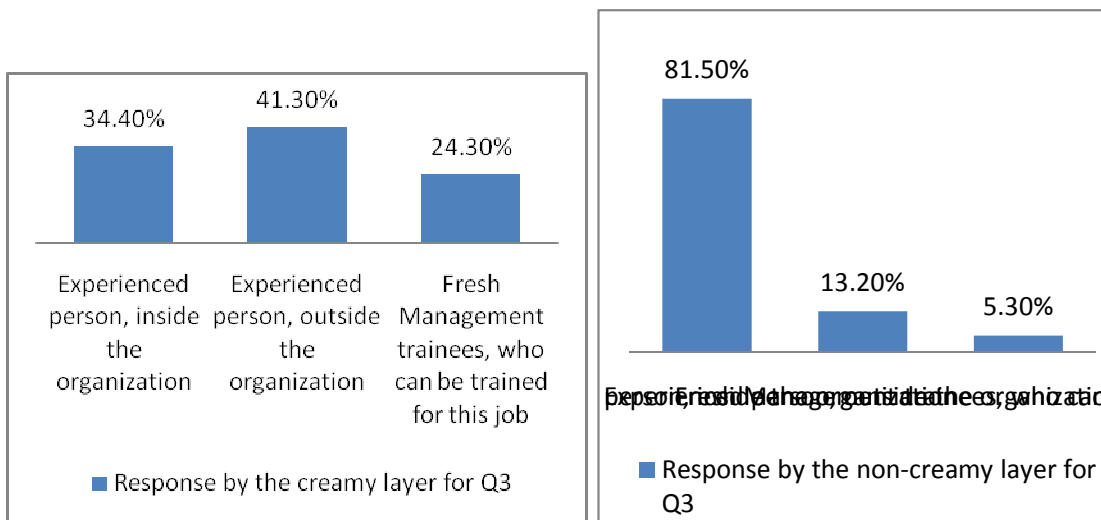


Figure 2- Diagrammatic representation of responses obtained from the HR professionals for Q3

- 34.4% of the creamy layer respondents prefer an experienced person inside the organization would be a best fit during HRBP recruitment, 41.3% believe an experienced outsider would be apt and 24.3% believe fresh management trainees would fit best for the HRBP role.
- 81.5 % of the creamy layer respondents prefer an experienced person inside the organization would be a best fit during HRBP recruitment, 13.2 % believe an experienced outsider would be apt and only 5.3% believe fresh management trainees would fit best for the HRBP role.

Q4) Do you think you are able to relate yourself with that of HR business partnering role through your routine HR functions?

- In the creamy layer,73% of the respondents was able to relate their job with that of a HRBP frequently and 27% of the respondents was able to relate their job with that of a HR BP very

rarely.

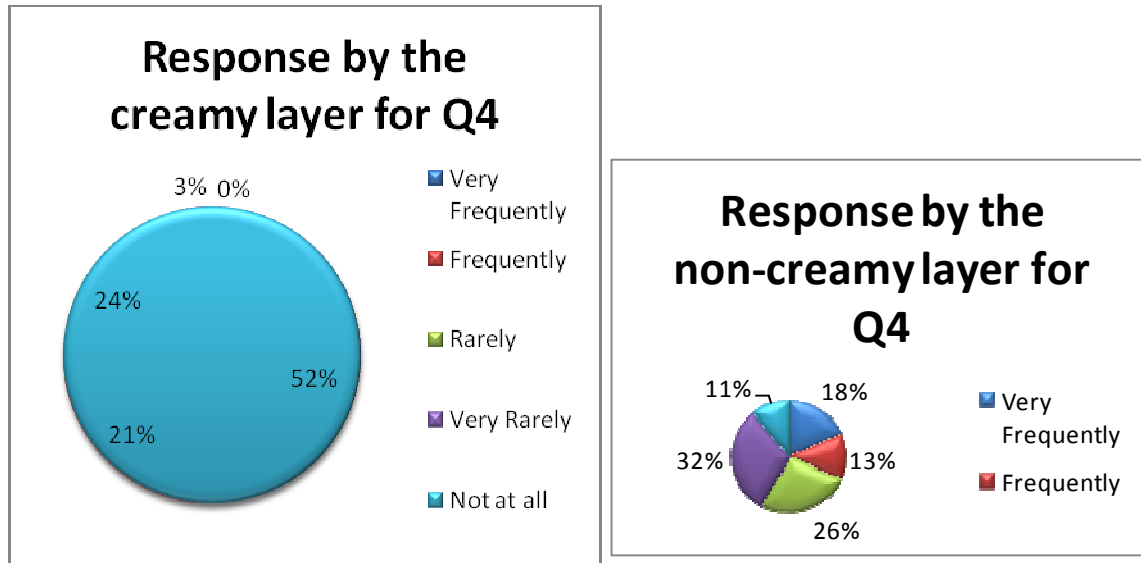


Figure 4-Pictorial representation of the responses obtained from the HR professionals for Q4

- As far as the non-creamy layer of the respondents, there was a mix in the response as only 31% were able to relate their job frequently as that of a HRBP, 58% of the respondents were able to relate rarely and 11% were not able to relate themselves with that of the HRBP.

Q5) Are you provided the opportunity to participate in conferences and seminars, relating to current trends in industry or HRD ?

- All the 100% of the respondents, from the creamy layer were able to get the chance of contributing in consultations and seminars.
- Only 44.7% of the respondents, from the non-creamy layer was able to get the chance of contributing in consultations and seminars and remaining 55.3% were not able to get such suggestions.

VII. FINDINGS

- From the responses for Q1, it is quite evident that the level of Awareness in creamy layer with respect to HR business partnering was relatively higher when compared to the level of awareness of the non creamy layer.
- Majority of the creamy layer respondents realizes the need of HRBPs in the organization, which is relatively higher than the need of that of the responses recorded by the non-creamy layer. This might be because of the higher level of awareness among the creamy layer.
- The creamy layer respondents prefers an outsider (both experienced or fresh management trainees combined) than that of an insider for the role of HRBP. But it is other way around in the non-creamy layer, as they prefer experienced insider over the other two. This might be because of their internal desire to go higher up in the ladder.
- HR professionals in the creamy layer of the management were able to relate themselves more frequently to that of the roles of a HRBP, but on the other side of the coin, HR professionals in the non-creamy layer of the management was rarely able to relate their job with that of a HRBP.
- From the responses obtained from Q5, it is evident that HR professionals in the creamy layer tend to get more opportunity to participate in conferences and seminars pertaining to current trends of the industry and HRD than the non creamy layer.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

- Creamy layer HR people prefer an outsider for the role of HRBP than that of an experienced insider. But internally experienced people who have gained the advantage of organizational experience, while becoming HRBPs might be able to relate create well defined strategies in such a way that suits best to the organization than those of the outsiders.
- The non creamy HR professionals might be given some small tasks, in basket exercises related to the functions of a HRBP to find out the best internal resource available. Once such persons are identified, they can be given a defined career path and their performance in various stages must be analyzed carefully.
- HR people in the non-creamy layer of the organization must be given more internal training programs, workshops, regarding the current trends in HRD, as they will be the ones who will be acting as operational HRs down the line while implementing the strategical ideas designed by the HRBPs. Also when they are exposed to such training programs, their level of realization for the necessity of the strategy would increase which will reflect in the effectiveness of implementation.
- HR people in the non-creamy layer must be exposed to attend more of outside conferences and seminars too, which will give them a real picture of how the corporate world is continuously evolving, which will make them equipped to expect the changes.
- There HR creamy layer people participating in the conferences and seminars might share the new insights through their knowledge management systems which will be beneficial for the non-creamy layer to get much more awareness regarding the current trends in the industry and HRD.

IX. REFERENCES

1. Brian Becker, Mark Huselid and Dave Ulrich, Harvard Business Press, [2001], The HR Scorecard.
2. Cliffe, S. [1998]. Human resources: Winning the war for talent. Harvard Business Review, 76, 18-19.
3. Ed Griffin, Liz Finney, Jo Hennessy and Dilip Boury, Roffey Park, [2009], Maximising the Value of Business Partnering,
4. Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchinson, S., & Sowa, D. [1986]. Perceived organizational support. Journal of Applied Psychology, 71, 500-507.
5. Human Resource Champions, Dave Ulrich [1997], Harvard Business Press.
6. Jans, N. A. [1989]. Organizational commitment, career factors and career/life stage. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 10, 247-267.
7. Martin Reddington, Mark Williamson, Mark Withers, Reed Elsevier [2005], Transforming HR – Creating Value through People.