

6 Ways to influence as an HR professional

A company's greatest asset is its employees, the HUMANS that work every day to drive the business forward. As such, human resources professionals are those best qualified to manage, strategise and advise on best practices where human capital is concerned. But how can HR gain the influence within the business that they deserve?

1. Know your audience and be prepared to speak their language

In order to be heard in HR you need to know your audience and what makes them take notice and listen. In many cases this will be the financial impact of what you're proposing, but it could also be how your suggestion improves productivity, morale, motivation or any one of a number of benefits to the organisation.

If you can connect with those involved in your discussion and find out what it is that gives you the highest chance of gaining their support, then the battle is half won and you'll have gained influence with them for the future.

2. Be prepared to get involved

It's all very well theorizing and telling others what needs to be done, but you should be prepared and enthusiastic about actually getting involved in a practical sense. Leading a team that spearheads a project, creating material for an internal campaign or continuing discussions with individual departments, are all tasks that you should be willing to complete yourself.

If others within the business can see that you're willing to pioneer a project and get your hands dirty, then they'll not only respect you as an individual, but also HR as a department for actively driving the business in a direction that it needs to go to prosper.



3. Take backup

It's always easier to convey a message and gain approval if you already have agreement from others. A united front from HR will help to increase influence over those that you're in discussions with. The old adage 'two heads are better than one' is true when it comes to fielding questions, researching a topic and preparing collateral that backs your proposals.

If you can gain approval from those outside of HR, then this further increases the potential influence you will have in future discussions. It may be that a staggered strategy is required, whereby you speak to certain influential colleagues before others, in order to build your 'backup team'.

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4. Lead by example

As mentioned above, getting involved and being seen to taking an active part in a strategy is very important. One of the lasting effects is that people tend to respond to someone that leads by example.

Other areas of the business will be keen to follow your lead. It's not just the proactive projects and initiatives that are important though, the little things such as taking note of your own actions are just as influential. For example, if you ask that a particular task is completed in a certain way, then make sure that's the way YOU complete it.

If everyone in the business was to lead by example, in a positive way, then you'd have an engaged, happy and productive brand.



6. Find and attract HR talent based on the above

Building a team that reflects the qualities detailed above is key to maintaining and increasing influence that HR has with the rest of the business. Creating a recruiting strategy that actively encourages and searches for applicants with the above traits will strengthen your HR department and its reputation in the organization.

Creating an onboarding experience that reflects your work ethic and culture is crucial to finding the right people for your HR team.

5. Be 'human'

Being 'human' is an important factor when it comes to building influence with colleagues. Unlike the online environment, in the real world, empathy, consideration and forethought are all traits that are respected and appreciated by colleagues. Emotional intelligence allows you to see a situation and act accordingly to get the best result for everyone involved.

If employees know that this is the way in which you work and treat people, then they're more likely to come to you for support or guidance, building the influence you have with them.

