



Levels of work in Human Resources (a reference tool)



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Accountability Based Companies by Design®

The purpose of this document

This document is one of a series of tools that looks at the nature of work within the different functional areas of a business. As a reference for the Human Resource function, it can

- help you differentiate among the levels of work complexity and the nature of work at each level within HR.
- facilitate understanding of the different levels of work among HR practitioners and the people they support throughout their organizations.

It provides a strong foundation upon which to make judgments and decisions regarding all HR roles. However, it is not intended to provide complete job descriptions, nor to fully represent all the nuances and specific organizational needs that may exist within any particular HR role or organization.

You will find it a useful support for any or all of the following:

- Understanding different levels of work complexity.
- Clarifying roles.
- Identifying missing or duplicated work.
- Designing roles within HR and recruiting to fill them.
- Marketing HR's work throughout the organization.
- Supporting career development, succession planning, and talent management.

Enjoy!

HR work—LW1

	Generic work	Specific HR work
Work focus	Deliver quality and customer service within established variances	Deliver prescribed outputs (e.g. accurate, timely preparation and analysis of employee data, management reports, payroll and benefits transactions) <i>so that quantity, quality and timeliness targets are met and confidentiality is maintained</i>
Business goals	Schedule and complete all required tasks	Provide front-line HR support and administration to the organization, ensuring all transactional activities take place in a timely fashion to operate a reliable employment system
Longest assignment (examples)	3 months	Prepare and deliver quarterly turnover/attendance/benefits usage/job evaluation reports—within 2 weeks (HRIS analyst/coordinator role) Coordinate annual campus recruitment/career fair activities and screen resumes, ensuring brochures, facilities, and interview schedules are arranged—within 6 weeks (Recruitment Coordinator) Collect and analyze data on local salaries—within 3 months (Compensation & Benefit Coordinator role)
Business decisions/ scope of judgement (examples)	Use guidelines to make decisions, seeking manager input if there is ambiguity	Respond to employee issues and exceptions to stated policies or guidelines, using effective inter-personal skills and determining when to escalate and inform management Based on employee feedback, provide recommendations and advice to manager in evaluating methods, tools, procedures
Resource decisions	Use assigned resources effectively to satisfy quality and customer needs	Provide HR support to the organization, planning work to incorporate advice to managers and employees, processing and distributing documentation, and updating HR systems and files within the limited time available
Managerial leadership	Work within a team	Work collaboratively with team colleagues Participate in HR department functions to ensure team goals are achieved Actively share information with other team members regarding successes, issues, trends, and ideas
Oversight/ unique value	Represent the company and consistently deliver quality service Coach other LW1 workers, if appropriate	Provide feedback to HR and line management on employee responses, procedural breakdowns, and efficiency opportunities Maintain reliable HR systems/processes to ensure employee satisfaction and build credibility Model behaviours that reflect the organization's values and desired culture
Internal relations	Maintain and improve relationships with internal customers and stakeholders	Communicate as prescribed with other groups within the HR function, the business, and other support functions to provide general HR information, request input, and support day-to-day management of HR issues

HR work—LW1

	Generic work	Specific HR work
External relations	Maintain and improve relationships with external customers	Communicate with vendors (e.g. HRIS, EAP, Compensation/Benefits, Training, Recruitment) and potential employees
Sample positions	Front line staff	Compensation & Benefits Clerk Payroll Administrator HRIS Analyst Administrative Clerk Training Coordinator Staffing/Recruitment Coordinator Health & Safety Coordinator Employee Relations Coordinator Labour Relations Coordinator

HR work—LW2

	Generic work	Specific HR work
Work focus	Manage and improve processes	<p>Effectively implement, monitor, and deliver HR programs and transactions to support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staffing/recruitment • employee/labour relations • training and development • compensation/benefits/pensions • health/safety • HRIS <p>so that standard HR procedures and practices are maintained, adhered to, and continuously improved, and responsive specialist HR support is provided to internal client groups</p>
Business goals	Establish targets and monitor activities to meet monthly and quarterly goals	<p>Monitor to ensure accuracy, timeliness, and integrity of HR processes and achievement of short-term targets within budget and resources ...</p> <p>...while meeting annual business plan targets and employee needs</p>
Longest assignment (examples)	1 year	<p>Implement a major new HR program and educate internal client groups on its use while continuing to deliver current outputs to client groups—11-month task</p> <p>Design, develop, and implement an orientation program to induct new employees—6-month task</p> <p>Support a new GM in understanding her organization's HR issues by developing an HR briefing report and providing coaching as required to facilitate decision making and execution—6–9-month task</p>
Business decisions/scope of judgement (examples)	Within the context of given rules, exercise judgment to identify, diagnose, and solve operational problems	<p>Provide insight into HR reports (absenteeism, turnover, training) by identifying key variances, anomalies, and employee and cultural issues</p> <p>Provide sound HR service, advice, and recommendations on business issues based on a thorough understanding of client needs, current data, and HR trends</p> <p>Provide stewardship by continuously auditing compliance to company standards and corporate HR policies (e.g. health and safety, labour relations, harassment, etc.)</p> <p>Identify issues by monitoring client groups and/or interpreting client requests and needs. Translate these needs into the development of programs to solve HR issues</p>
Resource decisions	Manage assigned resources to meet customer needs and production demands	<p>Provide input to, and manage within, department budget</p> <p>Develop guidelines and reference tools for LW1 HR staff</p> <p>Develop work/activity schedules, adjusting as required to respond to changes</p> <p>Maintain and develop own professional knowledge and skills</p> <p>Make recommendations to management on skill development requirements and HR program implementation (e.g. performance management, compensation, training)</p>

HR work—LW2

	Generic work	Specific HR work
Managerial leadership	Manage a departmental team and/or key functional processes	Manage the front-line HR team. Provide context, set performance standards, educate on policy guidelines, assign tasks
Oversight/unique value	Supervise, guide, and provide feedback to direct reports Continuously improve work processes	Monitor task performance of direct reports (individually and as a team) against detailed plans and schedules. Provide individual coaching, identify training needs Identify operational issues and initiate appropriate corrective action; identify and escalate larger opportunities for continuous improvement of HR processes Model behaviours that reflect the organization's values and desired culture
Internal relations	Maintain and improve relationships with internal customers and stakeholders	Work collaboratively within assigned cross-boundary relationships to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide service, monitor compliance with HR policies, and provide decision support • represent HR on cross-functional task or project teams Understand and empathize with employee needs and reactions, and play them back to senior management, providing counsel and coaching to staff, and acting as the employee champion and confidential advisor to all employees in client groups
External relations	Use team efforts to maintain and improve relationships with external customers and stakeholders	Manage relationships with external HR stakeholders, e.g. payroll providers, employee survey providers, other outsource vendors
Sample positions	Manager	HR Manager (individual contributor) Manager, Recruitment Manager, HR Ontario (regional group) Manager, Total Rewards (funct. group) Manager, Labour Relations Manager, Employee Relations Manager, Health and Safety Manager, Change Management Manager, Training and Development Corporate Trainer/Training Consultant Manager, OE/OD Human Resource Consultant (HRC)

HR work—LW3

	Generic work	Specific HR work
Work focus	Develop and implement processes across teams to achieve assigned goals	<p>Develop, integrate, and enhance core HR processes, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and Development succession planning, talent pool development, performance management, managerial and technical training programs, capability assessment, qualification/certification, skills inventory, developmental assessments • Compensation and Benefits job evaluation, salary administration, retirement benefits/pensions, variable pay systems, non-cash incentives, group benefit/pension design and administration <p>so that processes and people are capable of meeting immediate requirements and short-term goals</p>
Business goals	Balance current goals with short-term goals	<p>Meet HR function's priority of providing improved service and support to the business, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing time to hire qualified candidates (and improving quality of candidates) • reducing benefits administration expenses • job evaluation linked to work complexity • establish a process to ensure long-term succession candidates are available <p>...while maintaining accuracy and integrity of current processes</p>
Longest assignment (examples)	2 years	<p>Introduce succession planning tools and implement across the organization—within 15 months</p> <p>Redesign the organization's performance management system and ensure organization-wide consistency and ease of use—within 18 months</p> <p>Implement online HRIS training of staff on the new system—within 2 years from business case development through successful implementation</p>
Business decisions/scope of judgement (examples)	Anticipate and respond to changing trends by selecting and implementing operational changes	<p>Identify HR process issues, analyze external benchmarks, then develop solutions to determine the best operational response</p> <p>Provide authoritative specialist expertise, judgement, and advice to clients</p> <p>Make final decisions and develop business cases for solving operational challenges (as agreed to with VP)</p> <p>Lead significant HR projects to achieve strategic goals, integrating various disciplines and teams</p>
Resource decisions	Allocate resources to achieve annual business goals	<p>Ensure effective use and allocation of assigned resources</p> <p>Ensure achievement of current year financial targets while establishing capability to achieve next year's goals and continuously improving against assigned metrics</p> <p>Recommend organizational changes, including staffing requirements, based on client needs</p>
Managerial leadership	Manage multiple teams and processes	Manage multiple processes, coordinating components of larger processes (e.g. job design, job evaluation, salary survey, base and variable pay, total rewards, etc.)

HR work—LW3

	Generic work	Specific HR work
Oversight/ unique value	Provide direction to direct reports on problems to address	<p>Develop and implement department plan, responding to short-term problems/fluctuations to meet 1-2 year goals</p> <p>Identify systemic operational issues and opportunities (people, systems, processes) and use this as a basis to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide direction and context in assigning LW2 work/problems to solve • ensure effective cross-functional processes • contribute to senior management strategy/change requirements <p>Model behaviours that reflect the organization's values and desired culture</p>
Internal relations	Ensure effective cross-boundary relationships	<p>Key member of operational management/ HR team</p> <p>Work collaboratively across the organization and within defined cross-boundary relationships to ensure HR processes are effectively implemented, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-ordinate annual performance management and salary review processes • advise business units on HR/employee implications of their proposals and business decisions • establish and monitor HR management and reporting activities across the organization to ensure compliance with all corporate, legal and regulatory standards • act as internal change agent <p>Market HR services across the organization; monitor and measure impact of services</p>
External relations	Develop and sustain external relationships, using them to leverage best practices and develop internal metrics	<p>Monitor the external environment for changes in regulations and emerging best practices in HR discipline</p> <p>Monitor relationships with key suppliers and internal customers to ensure service level agreements are met and new trends are identified</p>
Sample positions	Director	<p>Director, Training and Development</p> <p>Director, Compensation and Benefits</p> <p>Director, Organizational Effectiveness</p> <p>Director, Labour/Employee Relations</p>

HR work—LW4

	Generic work	Specific HR work
Work focus	Develop new customers, channels, markets, products, policies, and technology within a business model	Integrate the business strategy with employees' needs, identify gaps in organizational and employee capabilities, and develop and put in place new policies, systems, technologies, or disciplines to meet both employee and business needs so that employee efforts can be optimized and human resources are available as needed, regulatory requirements and risks are managed, and the organization has the HR processes and capabilities to meet its strategic goals
Business goals	Balance short-term business goals with medium-term growth objectives	Develop and maintain an integrated HR stewardship framework... ...while ensuring governance practices are incorporated into the development and implementation of HR processes and service delivery
Longest assignment (examples)	5 years	Analyze existing pool of talent, determining whether supply is sufficient to meet future business needs. Ensure employees are developed (where gaps in skills/competence are identified) or recruited to meet business goals—2.5 years Design an integrated compensation system, balancing employee and company needs to change from a culture of entitlement to one of merit—3.5 years Develop an integrated HR system for a business from start up—4.5 years
Business decisions/ scope of judgement (examples)	Envision medium-term market changes and respond with new products and methods for reaching customers	Develop the HR strategy and systems to support the business strategy and culture Continually assess HR strategy and systems to determine when renewal is required Set policy and ensure compliance on people management, professional development, and labour relations issues Advise the CEO on all business matters affecting the organization's culture Determine goals and priorities for HR and ways to integrate various HR functions Provide the HR and employee context and constraints for executive business decisions and contribute to strategy development, ensuring protection of the organization's human assets
Resource decisions	Manage resource allocation decisions to support the organization's strategic direction	Negotiate for people, tools, and systems (additional, redistributed, outsourced) required for the HR function to meet its commitments. Allocate resources among the various departments, balancing the need for organizational change with the organization's ability to cope with change
Managerial leadership	Manage multiple teams, processes, and functions	Manage and integrate a multi-department HR function, determining priority areas for developing and balancing competing resource requirements Manage the organization's managerial capability and development, esp. standards for managerial leadership for the organization Model the company's values and culture

HR work—LW4

	Generic work	Specific HR work
Oversight/ unique value	Develop goals and objectives to span multiple functions and processes. Integrate the work of the functional teams	<p>Develop HR policies that set the conditions for cultural and human capability to move the organization towards its vision</p> <p>Act as key coach and advisor to the president and members of the senior executive team on critical/sensitive HR management and organization matters</p> <p>Model behaviours that reflect the organization's values and desired culture</p> <p>Act as an equal member of the senior management team, contributing to business decision-making and ensuring business decisions reflect the organization's values and HR policies</p>
Internal relations	Establish the framework for relationships within the context of the business unit model and established medium-term goals	<p>Manage boundaries between the local business unit and the corporate centre. Design the HR systems needed to support local conditions within the corporate context</p> <p>Provide executive colleagues (primarily) with HR stewardship and advice related to business strategy, policy, the legislative/regulatory environment, and employee needs</p> <p>Ensure the voice of the employee is heard at senior levels, and disseminate information from the CEO and senior team about culture and values. Act as the company's conscience regarding human resource issues</p> <p>Act as internal change champion/sponsor</p> <p>Market HR services across the organization; monitor and measure impact of services</p> <p>Collaborate with other members of the management team to establish decision-making authorities and the nature of HR staff's cross-boundary relationships, including ensuring commitment from business leaders of appropriate business function involvement in HR projects</p>
External relations	Establish the framework for relationships with new customers/suppliers to identify growth opportunities and fundamental improvement changes	<p>Keep abreast of the external environment—legislative/regulatory/HR best practices—to provide stewardship, advise company executives on appropriate actions and plans, and develop HR systems to support required changes</p> <p>Influence vendors and outsourcers to ensure they build programs consistent with the organization's current and planned policies, programs, and systems</p> <p>Develop relationships with the business's unions/employee associations to create a mutually beneficial negotiating environment</p>
Sample positions	General Manager or VP	VP HR SVP HR CAO VP Organizational Development Chief Talent Officer VP Institute for Learning VP Training and Development

HR work—LW5

	Generic work	Specific HR work
Work focus	Develop the business model and make long-range policy decisions that affect culture, markets, products, channels, and pricing	Build the human resource management model. Integrate multiple HR functions across the enterprise's businesses and geographies, using HR tools to steward the creation of the desired corporate culture so that the enterprise's capability will be substantially re-configured to meet long-range strategic goals
Business goals	Establish the strategy to position the business for the long term	Design the HR business model, within the context of the LW6 long-term strategic plan, to substantively reposition how the business creates value... ...while ensuring that the organization's HR systems are operating with reliability and integrity, are consistent with corporate culture and values, and people management skills and disciplines are solidly embedded
Longest assignment (examples)	10 years	Support an organizational strategy of global expansion. Recommend country location (following environmental scanning on legislative and regulatory trends and cultural fit) and establish the required HR management structures and capabilities within selected countries—7 years Manage towards a nine-year labour relations strategy for the business and negotiate and maintain a series of 3-year agreements with the union Assist the senior management team in developing the right structure and filling it with the right people, as well as designing management practices to support the profitable growth of the business—7 years
Business decisions/scope of judgement (examples)	Envision medium- to long-term market changes and respond by setting policy and modifying the integrated business model	Develop the HR model to support growth in organizational scope, e.g. new markets, investments, mergers and acquisitions Continually assess the HR model to determine when renewal is required Ensure consistency on core policies, standards (i.e., culture and ethical behaviour, etc.) across multiple businesses and markets Develop key recommendations to CEO/Board on mid-term human resource strategies
Resource decisions	Structure the use of resources for economic profit	Establish a framework for the allocation of human resources for the benefit of the overall organization—succession planning, development, etc. Make recommendations to the CEO regarding placement of senior business leaders based on capability assessments Identify future human resource needs and strategies for meeting these needs
Managerial leadership	Manage a business unit	Direct and integrate HR functions in multiple lines of business (SVP HR, Corporate office of LW6 organization with multiple businesses at LW5) or Direct the HR function of an LW6 business within the framework of a global LW7 organization, supporting the CEO in integrating the people management needs of the business and the requirements of the broader corporation, or Direct a single HR function of significant scope and/or requiring complex, innovative approaches to culture, talent pool and knowledge management, and merger integration

HR work—LW5

	Generic work	Specific HR work
Oversight/ unique value	Design the organizational structure to deliver on the business strategy	<p>Manage the development of the talent pool to meet the needs of the business</p> <p>Model behaviours that reflect the organization's values and desired culture</p> <p>Act as an equal member of the senior management team, contributing to business decision-making and ensuring business decisions reflect the organization's values and HR policies</p>
Internal relations	Set context for business unit culture and model expected behaviour	<p>Act as a key member of an enterprise's corporate executive team, contributing to organization-wide priority setting and trade-offs</p> <p>As a key advisor, support business unit presidents and their human resources officers</p> <p>Shape the company's culture and model behavioural expectations for all employees within the context of the CEO's expressed vision for the organization</p> <p>Market HR services across the organization; monitor and measure impact of services</p>
External relations	Establish and develop relationships with government, lobby groups, capital providers, and joint venture partners to shape new business models	Establish and develop relationships with regulators and legislators, lobbyists, thought leaders, educational and financial institutions, as well as with HR counterparts, to benchmark leading global HR trends
Sample positions	Business Unit President or SVP	SVP HR EVP HR Chief Talent Officer CAO