

LEARNING MADE EASY



4th Edition

# Human Resources Kit

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
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Hire, develop, and retain  
the right employees

—  
Make the most of  
HR technology

—  
Access examples policies,  
templates, and forms online

**Andrea Butcher**





# Human Resources Kit

4th Edition

**by Andrea Butcher**

CEO of HRD — Human Resources Development

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

## Human Resources Kit For Dummies<sup>®</sup>, 4th Edition

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# Introduction

A company's ability to grow and stay on top of customer demand has always depended heavily on the quality of its people. Today, this relationship is even more relevant with a focus on creating an employee experience that meets the changing needs of the workforce. Businesses are now, more than ever, recognizing that a highly skilled and motivated workforce is mission critical — the talent within the business is the business.

Here are two overarching themes that form the foundation of this book:

- » The people who work within your business *are* your business.
- » Their needs and expectations are shaped by the dynamic, evolving environment in which we live.

As you peek into the world of human resources (HR), it's important to focus more on the human and less on the human as a resource, in an effort to understand the motivators and preferences that the people within your business bring to their work and the workplace.

## About This Book

Leaders and business owners who are intentional about building a strong organizational culture with engaged teams that consistently delight customers aren't hard to spot. They're the people who know how to attract and nurture these teams. In short, they're very good at leading the people and talent processes within their business and creating an employee experience that's meaningful and rewarding. In other words, they're good at leading human resources.

But doing this well is no small feat. In any job market, competition exists for the most desirable candidates, and once hired, these top performers are only a click away from leaving you. Not only that, but the HR and talent function now encompasses everything from creating a strategic workforce plan to ensuring a competitive total rewards strategy, launching effective learning and development initiatives, interpreting federal and state codes, and implementing people policies and benefits that safeguard team members while protecting company interests. And the stakes are high. The legal and economic consequences of a major HR misstep can be enormous.

As a business owner or leader, you've probably already faced these and other challenges. You may not think of yourself as an "HR person," but you recognize that you need to attract the best talent you can and motivate them to do their best work for you. In the past, you likely took on some aspects of finding and keeping top talent, with perhaps someone else on your team handling the details. Now, as your organization has grown, you're no doubt finding that your company's HR responsibilities have become more complicated. Whether you're a business owner who wants to make sure that you're up-to-date on employment regulations and HR best practices, or you're a leader within the business who has been asked to take on HR-related duties, you're going to need a resource and guidance along the way. Even if you attend conferences or network with others who are leading talent/HR functions in their businesses, you won't remember everything you hear. Ultimately, you need a straightforward yet comprehensive resource with information, insights, and tools to help align your company's HR practices and policies with the overall objectives of your business. That's the purpose behind the fourth edition of *Human Resources Kit For Dummies*.

Some companies are lucky enough to have their own HR professional or even an entire HR department. Most of these HR specialists have developed their skills through years of education and on-the-job experience. In writing this book, my aim is not to pretend that I can magically turn you into a seasoned HR professional by the time you read the last page. I *do* believe, though, that I can give you a fair representation of the issues HR leaders navigate, best practices for approaching these challenges, and enough background to help you better oversee or handle the HR/talent activities within your organization — both today and as you continue to grow.

What can you expect to gain from this new edition? For starters, you'll be better able to

- » Recognize how remote work and changing employee expectations are affecting the workplace of the future — and make the necessary long-term plans for success.
- » Examine what today's most successful and progressive companies are doing with respect to basic HR areas as recruiting, total rewards, learning and development, performance management, and employee engagement and retention.
- » View recruiting as an ongoing sales process and continually market your employer brand to hire the best talent.
- » Gain insight into practices (leading in a virtual environment and providing a competitive total rewards package) to create a meaningful and positive employee experience for your team members.
- » Understand the key regulatory issues that apply to many business owners and leaders, thus putting yourself in a better position to navigate the risks involved in hiring and leading team members.

This book provides general guidelines on how to set up and implement successful HR practices, as well as actual tools — templates — that you can use right away. In other words, *Human Resources Kit For Dummies*, 4th Edition, isn't simply a book to read; it's a book to use.

This edition has moved the helpful online documents from a CD to online at [www.dummies.com/go/humanresourceskit](http://www.dummies.com/go/humanresourceskit). From sample job descriptions to sample employee policies, you get a variety of tools you need to implement solid HR practices and procedures. Some of these forms are turnkey — ready to use immediately. Others are sample templates that you may want to adapt.

The collection of forms is comprehensive, but your situation may be unique. When in doubt, the best practice is always to contact a knowledgeable and experienced lawyer who specializes in this area.

## Foolish Assumptions

In writing *Human Resources Kit For Dummies*, I had to make certain assumptions about you, the reader. Because I'm not sure exactly what your background and needs are, I wrote the book with two broad audiences in mind:

- » Business owners who find that their growing companies are demanding a greater portion of their time and attention in managing one or more of the most common HR functions, such as recruiting, benefits administration, performance management, learning and development, and regulatory issues
- » Individuals in small to mid-size companies who have only a limited knowledge of HR functions but who have been asked to take on some or all of these roles

First and foremost, I want to address you as a businessperson — someone who, after reading the book, is knowledgeable not only about the nuts and bolts of HR but also about how to approach the function with the goal of becoming a major player in helping to run your company.

## Icons Used in This Book

When I want you to pay close attention to a specific piece of information, I place little pictures, called *icons*, next to the text in the margin. Here's what the icons mean:



TIP

This icon flags what I consider to be good and practical advice.



REMEMBER

I flag important conceptual information with this icon.



WARNING

This icon indicates something that is particularly sensitive and could get you into legal trouble if not handled properly. Always contact an attorney if you're unsure whether something is legally risky (regardless of whether it's flagged by a Warning icon).



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

This icon flags legal jargon and technical discussions.



FIND  
ONLINE

Whenever I mention a document that you can reference within the online tools, I use this icon. You can access the documents at [www.dummies.com/go/humanresourceskit](http://www.dummies.com/go/humanresourceskit).

## Beyond This Book

This book is full of information in plain English about human resources. If you want some additional pieces that you can refer to on a regular basis, check out the book's Cheat Sheet at [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com). Just search for "Human Resources Kit For Dummies Cheat Sheet."

## Where to Go from Here

Every chapter in this book covers a topic of importance to the HR function. But you'll likely find that some chapters have greater relevance to your situation than others. If you're completely new to the HR role, for instance, you'll want to start with Part 1 to build your baseline knowledge. If you have some experience hiring and managing staff, you may instead choose to start with the later chapters to discover the finer points of these activities. You don't have to read this book from start to finish to get the most out of it. Look through the table of contents and index so you can find those chapters or sections that address the issues you currently face.

# 1 Embracing the Evolving Role of HR

## IN THIS PART . . .

Understand the basics of human resources, also referred to today as the *talent* or *people* function.

Grasp the fundamental categories of HR responsibilities and walk through the steps involved in attracting the best talent.

Examine some of the most important trends in the HR and talent space, such as creating a positive employee experience, leading in a virtual environment, and ensuring HR and talent processes are equitable and inclusive.

Focus on the continued effect of technology, which is so rapidly changing the dynamics of the way in which human resources equip and support the workforce role.



## IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Identifying key HR responsibilities
- » Getting the people you want to hire to want to work for you
- » Providing a great employee experience
- » Generating growth and development opportunities for employees
- » Mitigating risk around hiring and managing employees

# Chapter 1

# Peeking into the World of HR

**W**hether you're a business owner building an organization, a leader within an organization supporting the success of your team, or a human resources (HR) or talent professional creating processes and systems that maximize the strengths and talents within your workforce, it's important to recognize that the people within your business *are* your business. You get more from the talent within your organization when you're clear about what success looks like, care for people, provide an experience that allows people to bring the best of who they are, and create processes and systems that support their needs and their ongoing growth and development.

No matter what products or services a company offers, the talents and abilities of every team member are what ultimately determine how well it performs and serves customers. Whether you call them team members or employees (I use both interchangeably throughout this book), these human beings differ from physical or financial assets of the company because each human being has unique talents and needs that collectively shape the culture of your organization. The world of HR exists to leverage their individual and collective potential, and because the focus is on the human (more so than the human as a resource), many

organizations are rebranding human resources to better reflect a focus on people, culture, and talent. Regardless of the name, the impact of strong talent and people processes in an organization is clear, particularly in today's complex work environment.

In order to best support the people within your organization, you have to understand what makes them tick — their preferences, their needs, their expectations, and their humanness, and in this volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, their humanness is front and center. Team members no longer “leave their personal lives at the door” as many are working from home — the line between personal and professional has blended as HR leaders promote life/work integration and focus on the holistic well-being of the workforce.

As organizations adapt to the shifting landscape, HR plays a critical role. This chapter provides an overview of how you can navigate the changing landscape and best support your team members (and ultimately, your business) in the process.

## Recognizing Key HR Responsibilities

Overall, the HR or talent function within an organization leads the decisions, activities, and processes designed to support the needs and performance of employees in today's dynamic environment. The most common responsibilities falling within the HR function include the following:

- » **Attracting talent:** Strategically attracting, sourcing, recruiting, and onboarding the talent needed to accomplish business goals
- » **Creating a positive employee experience:** Ensuring a safe environment and retaining team members
- » **Providing a total rewards package:** Establishing legally compliant, effective, and attractive compensation, benefits, and recognition
- » **Developing employees and providing opportunities for growth:** Ensuring that team members grow in knowledge and experience, and that their skill sets support the goals of the business
- » **Navigating risk:** Complying with the ever-increasing complexities within the regulatory environment

Regardless of the number of employees within your organization, a people-focus is important in order to get and keep the talent necessary to serve your customers. After they reach a certain size, most organizations find it more efficient to establish a team focused on people and culture — even if it consists of only one person.

Because of the increasing complexity of HR issues, larger organizations have boosted the size of their departments and typically employ specialists in areas such as talent acquisition, learning and development, and total rewards, but smaller organizations that don't have the resources for such specialization must ensure that the people who handle their HR functions (or they themselves) possess skills in several areas of HR rather than in one particular specialty.



REMEMBER

The HR profession has undergone enormous changes in the past 20 years . . . even the last 2 years, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. HR and talent activities are an integral part of a business (remember, the people in the business *are* your business). Rather than creating and executing a talent strategy in a vacuum, HR leaders work cooperatively with leaders at all levels of the business to determine the most effective ways to meet team members' needs.

## Building Your Team: Attracting Talent

One of the primary jobs of an HR professional is recruiting and hiring the best people for the organization. It all starts with developing an overall talent strategy. This involves putting your current employees in the right places to best address the organization's most critical task, as well as attracting additional people with the talent and attributes that complement both your short- and long-term business goals. At the heart of a talent strategy is taking advantage of the strengths of your people and augmenting their talent and capabilities in a thoughtful, focused way. (See Chapter 4 for more on creating a talent strategy.)



REMEMBER

A carefully crafted job description (or *position success profile* as I encourage you to think of it as) — and job postings based on it — are critical to bringing the best people onboard. Both should focus on a job's expected outcomes to attract the best applicants possible. The key to a good position success profile is clearly defining what success looks like (hence the name). (See Chapter 5 for more on creating a position success profile.)

From there, you have a broad array of potential candidate sources. These include referrals from your current team members, online job boards, social media and online networking sites, and your own company website. (See Chapter 6 for more on your sourcing strategy.)

Now comes the process of narrowing the candidate pool and assessing talent. The goal is to choose the prospective candidates who are in the best position to achieve the outcomes of the position, so it's critical to look for specifics about their experience and history of achievement in the focus areas that have been defined. You may use a video or phone interview as an initial way to determine those who are

likely to be most successful in the position. When it's time for the all-important in-person or more detailed virtual interview, you need to use effective interview techniques and strategies, with a special emphasis on nondiscriminatory interview questions. (See Chapter 7 for more on evaluating applicants and Chapter 8 for tips on interviewing.)

As you near the final hiring decision, it's important to set up a system to help select the right candidate, including how and when to conduct background and reference checks (refer to Chapter 9). Final considerations include ways to craft and present a job offer, and from there, techniques to negotiate a total rewards package to be competitive and win over an attractive candidate.

## Retaining and Engaging Talent: Creating a Positive Employee Experience

Recruiting and hiring great talent is obviously the first step but represents only one side of the talent strategy coin. Creating an environment and a culture that keep employees onboard is no less critical to the long-term growth of your organization. Employee retention begins the moment you connect with the prospective candidate in the recruiting process and is heightened on their first day with your organization (see Chapter 10). Upon joining the organization, one of your first responsibilities is to get to know your team member to best set them up for success. It's not a one-size-fits-all approach. Your employee handbook will provide general guidelines and expectations for all employees, but each manager should connect with individual employees regarding any individual needs or expectations. Communication and clarity are the keys to setting up new hires for success.

It's also important to leverage onboarding strategies to help new team members engage quickly, get off to a strong start, and have some quick wins. The onboarding process is ongoing and should include regular check-ins and follow-up about what the employee is learning through the process.

Every business needs an effective rewards and motivation system that includes how much and by what means employees are compensated (see Chapter 11). A first step for all organizations is to determine an overall compensation philosophy that can help establish pay levels and wage plans throughout the company. Your compensation philosophy also applies to raises, bonuses, and other forms of incentives. Next, of course, are the benefits themselves. It takes a high-level

understanding of (and access to experts who can provide detailed expertise on) health insurance, retirement packages, workers' compensation, employee wellness, and on-the-job safety (refer to Chapter 12).

Creating a great employee experience encompasses other elements that are important contributors to a motivated and satisfied workforce. Get to know the essentials of alternate work arrangements (for example, hybrid working arrangements and flexible work hours) and their value in retaining top performers (see Chapter 13). Consider, too, the importance of good corporate citizenship and getting ongoing feedback from team members via surveys — two components that boost employees' sense that they work in a business that does the right thing and values team members' perspectives.

## Developing Talent: Providing Opportunities for Growth

Developing talent is another way to retain and engage team members on an ongoing basis. Providing opportunities for growth is no longer a nice-to-have feature within organizations — employees *expect* opportunities for growth during their tenure. It bears repeating — your employees *are* your business, so connecting your learning and development goals to your business goals ensures a win-win for the employee and the company (see Chapter 14). Recognize the importance of both technical skill development and leadership development, and leverage innovation in educational activities and the variety of options available — microlearning, traditional classroom learning, coaching, and mentoring.

Whereas learning and development programs typically are about skills improvement, career development emphasizes longer-term qualities and expertise that employees need to enrich their careers in general (see Chapter 15). Understand the role of coaching and mentoring relationships to foster personal growth, as well as leadership development and succession planning efforts to identify and groom future leaders.

Employers need to provide recognition and offer feedback if they expect the people working for them to accomplish what's needed — and improve on their performance. Consider implementing a performance management process that's ongoing and built on the success needed in the position. (See Chapter 16 for details on assessing talent through a performance management process.)

# Minimizing Organizational Risk

There's no substitute for the guidance of a trusted employment attorney, but HR professionals need to have a basic understanding of the legal issues and challenges that come with hiring and managing employees — and with terminating the employee relationship.



REMEMBER

Throughout this book, the legal-related information provided is the result of a collaborative effort with the law firm of Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C., and the information is presented to increase your knowledge of employment-related law, but I strongly recommend consulting a knowledgeable and experienced lawyer regarding anything you encounter in your work that is legally complex.

First and foremost, proactively put processes and systems in place (and create a culture) that minimizes charges of discrimination and other employment-related legal claims. Be sure to understand the concept of disparate impact and the steps you can take to keep your business as compliant with employment laws as possible. And, although your lawyers should take the lead in any formal legal actions or responses, you also need to be well acquainted with issues and situations covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Family and Medical Leave Act; the Fair Labor Standards Act; and other important federal, state, and local laws that can impact your business.

A successful business takes an ethical approach to all its interactions with customers, as well as its employees. As a business leader, you need to know how to handle — sensitively but firmly — what are undoubtedly the least pleasant aspects of your role. These include, but aren't limited to, dismissals, layoffs, and sexual harassment or hostile work environment claims. (See Chapter 17 for a discussion of key HR-related laws and Chapter 18 for more on the specifics of termination and other difficult situations.)