

How to become a Human Resources Manager

Author: Memory Nguwi . August 2020

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Table 1: Google Search Retains for Various Managerial Roles](#)

[Human resources manager qualification](#)

1. [Graduate trainee](#)

2. [Human Resources Clerks](#)

3. [Human Resources Officer](#)

4. [Human Resources Manager or Executive](#)

[Competitor Qualifications](#)

[Core Qualifications](#)

[Skills Required](#)

[Knowledge](#)

[Skills](#)

[Abilities](#)

[Work Style](#)

[Why is human resources important?](#)

[The human resources department](#)

[How to structure the human resources department](#)

1. [Human Resources administration](#)

[2. Industrial Relations/Employees relations](#)

[3. Reward management](#)

[4. Talent development](#)

[5. Talent Acquisition](#)

[6. People Analytics](#)

[How much do human resources Managers make?](#)

[Why the Human Resources Manager Role is the right career for you?](#)

Introduction

The field of human resources is a growing field in terms of the number of people joining this profession. In the USA close to about a million people are employed in the human resources profession at managerial level. This number includes those in mainstream human resources, training, industrial relations and specialist roles. The unemployment rate for the same category of human resources managers is 3.4% in the USA. According to this site (<https://studentscholarships.org/>) the human resources profession in the USA is expected to grow by 10.4% over the next 10 years.

A search on google for the word “human resources management” retains 2.7 billion cumulative searches. The estimated monthly search is 22 000 searches. When you search for “human resources manager” google retains 2.6 billion searches with an estimated monthly search again of around 22 000. Below I show the google statistics for various same level roles to check how the role of human resources manager role compares to other professional roles in terms of search volume.

Table 1: Google Search Retains for Various Managerial Roles

Job Title	Cumulative Google Searches	Estimated monthly searches
Human Resources Manager	2.6 billion	22,200
Marketing Manager	2.3 billion	14,800
Procurement Manager	954 million	33,100
Finance Manager	1.7 billion	18,100
Legal Services Manager	1.9 billion	10
Engineering Manager	1.7 billion	6,600
Production Manager	2.1 billion	6,600

Other related titles like Human Resources Executive yields a total of 1.4 billion google searches and an estimated 550 monthly searches. The other related title is Head Human Resources, which yields a total

of 2.6 billion and an estimated monthly search volume of 210. However you look at the human resources profession, the statistics point to a profession that is in huge demand.

If we are to use the google search volumes above as an indicator of interest in the human resources profession, you will notice that the searches for the human resources manager role are very competitive. There is a massive demand from aspiring career seekers to enter the human resources field. The key question for everyone who wants to join this profession is what qualifications are required to go into this profession?

Human resources manager qualification

While human resources manager role has shown this kind of demand, there is a challenge in terms of what is required for someone to be a human resources manager. The first point to note is that no one starts as a human resources manager. The profession has career progressions starting from a lower level to a human resources manager. Some of the entry positions include the following:

1. Graduate trainee – human resources
2. Human Resources Clerks – these can be in the various disciplines of human resources such as training, analytics, industrial relations, compensation etc.
3. Human Resources Officer – This is the level that normally one needs to reach before transitioning to the Human Resources Manager role.
4. Human Resources Manager or Executive – Some now prefer to call this role Head Human Resources or Human Resources Executive. Unless there is a Human Resources Director above, the human resources manager is the role that is overall in charge of driving the human resources strategy of the business. The role is responsible for developing human resources strategies in support of the business strategy. Such a strategy covers all facets of human resources

The qualifications you require to get into human resources tend to vary sometimes from country to country. Traditionally you would need to have a social science degree to be able to have a head start in human resources, especially at entry-level. This has now all changed. For most professions, to join such a profession you would need to have studied something related to that profession. The story is different in human resources. Some has decried the low barriers to entry in the profession such that everyone who so wishes regardless of what they would have studied can join the profession.

The trend now, it seems is that while the human resources profession is about managing people at work, the profession can accommodate you regardless of what field you have studied. I know people who have done non-social science degrees who have gone on to excel in the role of human resources manager and some have progressed to Vice President Level. People with the following qualifications have managed to enter the human resources profession and in most cases went on to excel better than those with a social science-related degree.

Competitor Qualifications

1. Engineering degrees

2. Pure Science Degrees e.g. Maths, Physics, chemistry etc.
3. Arts
4. Business Studies
5. Operations Management
6. Law
7. Economics
8. Accounting

The reason for this trend could be that this field in most countries is not regulated or if regulated is loosely regulated.

Traditionally, for easy passage into a career in human resources you would need to possess any of the following degrees;

Core Qualifications

1. Human resources
2. Industrial relations
3. Psychology {especially industrial, occupational or organisational psychology}
4. Sociology
5. Political Science

With your mainstream social science or human resources qualification, which could be a degree or a diploma, you will face massive competition from outsiders. With the advent of analytics, the human resources field is shifting towards a preference for highly analytical people with high numerical reasoning. It looks like that if you are aspiring to join the human resources profession and win, you would need to possess high analytical and numerical ability which tend to be found in people who have studied pure sciences. The tragedy for the human resources profession is that has traditionally attracted people with very low numerical ability. Of late there have been complaints against HR professionals because they tend to generally exhibit low business acumen.

My view is that if you would want to join this profession and add value you would need to have; numerical ability, analytical ability and high business acumen. Even if you are studying your mainstream human resources degree or social science opt to have the three areas in your studies if your degree program allows. However, to bridge that gap we have noticed that most people have gone on to pursue Masters Degrees in any of these areas or business, in general, The other trend is that as you ascend to the human resources manager role, you are now required to have a Masters degree in your mainstream HR, Social Sciences or in business in general. This is why you will notice that most of the senior roles in human resources are occupied by people who have Masters degrees.

Over and above these qualifications, at the human resources manager level, you would need to have experience at a similar level ranging from 5 years to as high as 10 years.

Skills Required

O*Net online <https://www.onetonline.org/> lists the following skills as important for the human resources manager role:

Knowledge

- **Personnel and Human Resources** — Knowledge of principles and procedures for personnel recruitment, selection, training, compensation and benefits, labour relations and negotiation, and personnel information systems.
- **Administration and Management** — Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modelling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
- **English Language** — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- **Law and Government** — Knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.
- **Education and Training** — Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.

Skills

- **Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Management of Personnel Resources** — Motivating, developing, and directing people as they work, identifying the best people for the job.
- **Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- **Judgment and Decision Making** — Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
- **Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.

Abilities

- **Oral Comprehension** — The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- **Oral Expression** — The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- **Written Comprehension** — The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
- **Deductive Reasoning** — The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
- **Speech Clarity** — The ability to speak clearly so others can understand you.

Work Style

- **Integrity** — Job requires being honest and ethical.
- **Self Control** — Job requires maintaining composure, keeping emotions in check, controlling anger, and avoiding aggressive behaviour, even in very difficult situations.
- **Leadership** — Job requires a willingness to lead, take charge, and offer opinions and direction.
- **Dependability** — Job requires being reliable, responsible, and dependable, and fulfilling obligations.
- **Cooperation** — Job requires being pleasant with others on the job and displaying a good-natured, cooperative attitude.

Why is human resources important?

The human resources function and the human resources profession are important because they are mandated with managing one of the most important resources that any organisation would need. This requires that the department is properly structured and manned by qualified and competent people. The human resources department is important and this importance will only be apparent if the key stakeholders in the organisation properly position and structure the role to deliver value.

The human resources department

The human resources department size largely depends on the size of the organisation and the number of employees being managed. The ideal ratio of HR employees to staff ratio is normally 1:100. This ratio should be contextualised, as in highly automated environments; the ratio could be as high as 1:200. The ratio also tends to vary by sector. Before you plug in this ratio for structuring your own organisation, you would need to look at your organisational context and what the trends are in your industry. For your purpose, this is how you calculate the HR to employee ratio.

$$\text{HR to employee ratio} = \frac{\text{Number of HR staff (FTE)}}{\text{Number of total staff (FTE)}} * 100\%$$

How to structure the human resources department

The structure of your human resources department will depend largely on the size of your organisation with large organisations having all the core aspects of human resources in their structure. The functions that you should aim to have in your human resources department are shown below and these can be manned at different levels in terms of role level.

1. Human Resources administration – this function looks after all administrative aspects of human resources. It could cover things like payroll, leave administration and all other employee benefits of an administrative nature.

2. Industrial Relations/Employees relations- this function would be responsible for developing the right and supportive industrial relations for the business. They will manage the disciplinary and grievance processes. At a strategic level, this function is responsible for developing an employee relations strategy for the business and ensuring that that strategy is fully implemented.
3. Reward management – this function is responsible for developing the reward strategy for the business and aligning these to the needs of the business. All compensation and benefits aspects fall under this function.
4. Talent development – largely responsible for the development of the talent strategy for the business. The training and development function is housed in this function
5. Talent Acquisition – this function is responsible for developing and implementing an employee resourcing strategy for the business. All matters related the recruitment, selection and onboarding of staff will fall under this function.
6. People Analytics – the function is responsible for the management of all people data and ensuring that all people data is interpreted to inform business decisions.

How much do human resources Managers make?

You can go into human resources for money {benefits the role offers} or because you love the work that human resources professionals do. In countries like South Africa, the salaries for human resources managers range between R177 000 to R766 000 per annum. This salary excludes perquisites. In the USA you are looking at USD48 000 to USD94 000.

Why the Human Resources Manager Role is the right career for you?

If you love dealing with people, the human resources manager role will do for you. When it's structured properly in can give you a fulfilling career. As you plan this noble profession you must note that it is not without its challenges. People are difficult to manage largely because they are different and they react to different situations in a very different way.

Memory Nguwi is an Occupational Psychologist, Data Scientist, Speaker, & Managing Consultant-Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd a management and human resources consulting firm. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/memorynguwi/> Phone +263 4 481946-48/481950/2900276/2900966 or cell number +263 77 2356 361 or email: mnguwi@ipcconsultants.com or visit our website at www.ipcconsultants.com

<https://thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/How-To-Become-A-Human-Resources-Manager->