

Only passionate human resources practitioners develop in challenging business environments

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Human Resources is the business arm responsible for employer and employee workplace relationships. The employer is interested in seeing workplace targets met. The employee is interested in getting paid well for meeting the targets set. At face value, it looks evident that anyone can become a human resources practitioner with appropriate training. So why are there unending conflicts between employers and employees? Why do some Human Resources Practitioners (HRPs) fail to create healthy workplace environments yet have the qualifications? Passion plays an important part, and HRPs without passion for the job fail to develop.

In general terms, passion refers to intense emotion and is internal to the individual. Passionate HRPs have a burning desire to resolve workplace challenges. They go the extra mile by taking responsibility and not leaving challenges unresolved. It is the passion that will drive them to research more about the challenges at hand, look for previous examples of similar cases, and resolve them. In looking for appropriate methods for resolving the challenges at hand, the HRP gains practical experience.

Academic and professional training in human resources management is good as it gives standard guidelines on how to conduct business. However, training alone will not ensure or guarantee that results. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought many challenges for companies. The most significant is that employees work from home under World Health Organisation (WHO) lockdown guidelines. To any HRP, it is the employer's responsibility to unveil funds that will enable employees to work from home. The HRP will draw up a standard plan which should apply to every employee. When employees approach the HRP about challenges with the work from a home plan, the HRP will look at other possible options.

On the other hand, a passionate HRP will first assess and analyse the nature of the challenges they may face and then draw up a plan to address possible challenges. Passionate HRPs do not wait until challenges come up but look around for potential challenges and strive to resolve them before they grow. During the process, the HRP undergoes self-development and grows from one strength to another.

Conflict management is an area that demonstrates differences between passionate and non-passionate HRPs. Non-passionate HRPs are quick to forward workplace conflicts to the organisation legal

practitioners. They do not see themselves as responsible or part of the problem-solving team. They see themselves as facilitators whose responsibility is to pass information to others who will resolve the conflicts. In organisations that adhere to defined reporting structures, conflict management is simple to resolve because it is administered according to set policies and procedures. Organisations that do not follow defined reporting structures are challenging to manage and require the HRP to be more passionate when dealing with conflict. For example, a performance-related issue by a Security Guard raised by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) should, under normal circumstances, be resolved by the HRP. However, where the CEO takes it upon themselves to deal with the Security Guard, it is difficult for the HRP to resolve it. HRPs are quick to qualify their actions by stating that they need to remember where their bread is buttered. It takes a passionate HRP to look for appropriate communication methods and advise the CEO that they are there to assist them to resolve the conflict at hand. A general HRP will wait for the CEO to confront them. In contrast, a passionate HRP will approach the CEO and advise them to leave the matter in their hands. With passion, the HRP will make every effort to resolve the conflict and ensure that both parties are satisfied.

According to Steve Jobs, “You have to be burning with an idea, or a problem, or a wrong that you want to right. If you’re not passionate enough from the start, you’ll never stick it out.”

Passion will drive HRPs to research for more practical problem solving and performance enhancement strategies. In challenging business environments, HRPs will either grow or remain stagnant. With passion, the function of HRPs will not be generalized support but will be a specialized performance enhancer. It will not only take high academic, professional qualifications and many years of experience, but it will require a passion for going beyond the ordinary. Non-passionate HRPs will be frustrated by challenging economic environments, but passionate HRPs will develop in the same challenging environments.

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