4 Tips for Success as an HR Department of One



Ready, set, take everything you've learned about being an HR professional and see to the hiring, training, compensation, retention and inspiration of every employee in the company, all while protecting the interests of that company, all by yourself. Not many would consider such a role a piece of cake.

Here are a few tips to help make the role of sole HR professional more approachable.

1. Get the Big Picture

Get to know the managers in your company and find out about needs and concerns – and what they're expecting from you. Making yourself approachable and available from the start makes it more likely that you won't be the last one to know if there's a personnel issue. It also helps establish your credibility and gives you a chance to ensure that expectations are realistic. Ask the leadership team how the HR department relates to achieving short- and long-term company goals.

2. Ensure That HR Is Part of the Big Picture

Share the benefit of your expertise and experience with management to contribute to the overall strategy. Make sure that the numerous day-to-day tasks every HR department faces don't get in the way of creating a path to improvement. Articulating a plan and getting buy-in are the first steps.

3. Use the Right HR Tools

Being organized is foundational to any HR department and is even more crucial in an HR department of one. A right-sized HRIS (Human Resource Information System) can be an enormous benefit to a solo practitioner, helping to make managing attendance records, performance evaluations, benefits, and even payroll much more manageable. And the available reporting and analytics can be invaluable in providing accurate information on which to base goals for the organization.

4. Make Sure You're Informed

A solo HR professional doesn't have to know everything, but being aware of legal issues and the changing HR landscape makes you an indispensable asset. The library,

the Internet, and your own bookshelf are just the starting points for offering guidance. Even though the HR department might be solely your responsibility, the network of experienced professionals that you have built over the years means that you’re not really in it alone.

The people you have counted on in the past might not be right down the hall any more, but they are a phone call away. And don’t wait until a crisis arises to establish a relationship with an HR attorney.

Finding the Right HRIS for Your Organization

Fortunately there are HRIS software packages that are designed for smaller companies and the HR departments that go with them.