“The Transfer Student’s Guide to Obtaining a Career in Human Resources”

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3
Introduction 4
Entry Level HR 5
  Salary 5
  Qualifications 6
  Responsibilities 6
  Pros and Cons of Entry Level HR 7
Mid-Level HR 7
  Salary 8
  Qualifications 8
  Responsibilities 9
  Pros and Cons of Mid Level HR 10
Senior Level HR 11
  Salary 11
  Qualifications 11
  Responsibilities 12
  Pros and Cons of becoming HR Manager 13
Works Cited 14
Executive Summary

If you decide to enter the Human Resources professional field you will have a long and satisfying career filled with many opportunities for advancement. The respectable field of HR is worth the investment in education because of the opportunities for growth, competitive salary, duties and helping employees within the organization. So, if you are transferring to a university under the business administration program and haven’t decided on your focus yet, then we strongly recommend studying business administration with an option in HR. Human Resources is becoming a popular career as companies are beginning to place more emphasis on employee relations and its effects on the organization. If you consider yourself someone who has solid decision making skills, great interpersonal skills and you want to be in a position of authority, then we can’t recommend a better path to take. If that sounds like you then we invite you to read on to learn more about Human Resources Management and all that it has to offer.

“Human Resources isn’t a thing we do. It’s the thing that runs our business.”

-Steve Wynn, Wynn Las Vegas
Introduction

Business is one of the most popular majors at California State University Los Angeles. In 2016, of the 24,169 undergraduate students enrolled at Cal State LA, 4,336 students enrolled in the College of Business and Economics (DailyMajorReports, 2016). According to the National Center on Education Statistics, business is chosen as a major by 22 percent of students (Newman, 2012). In the latest survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 63 percent of companies said they were looking to hire business majors, the second-highest major after engineering.

Furthermore, industry research firm IBISWorld predicts strong growth over the next five years in industries such as human resources (Newman, 2012).

You may have already heard about or dealt with Human Resources at one time or another while working a part-time or full-time job, so you may already know that handling employees relations is a very important aspect of an organization. Human resources can be viewed as a bridge between the organization and its employees. Every organization needs to recruit people and train them, but Human Resources does more than just that. HR implements performance appraisals, ensures workplace safety and motivates employees as well as promotes workplace communication.

The Cal State LA curriculum for a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an option in Human Resource Management, requires 15 units from the following courses (in addition to 15 units in Lower Division Courses and 30 units in Upper Division Courses):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER - OPTION: Human Resources Management (21 Units)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester - Required Courses (15 units):</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGMT 4400 Strategic Human Resource Management</td>
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<td>MGMT 4402 Managing Positive Employment Relations</td>
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<td>MGMT 4403 Compensation Management</td>
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<td>MGMT 4405 Talent Management</td>
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<td>MGMT 4407 International Human Resource Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semester - Electives (6 units): Select two courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECON 4720 Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGMT 4108 High Performance Management</td>
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<td>MGMT 4154 Special Topics in Management</td>
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<td>MGMT 4401 Training and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGMT 4404 Current Topics and Cases in Human Resource Management</td>
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<td>MGMT 4406 Staffing</td>
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<td>MGMT 4408 Managing Human Resource Information Systems</td>
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<td>MGMT 4409 Career Development</td>
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Based on data collected by Cal State LA’s Office of Institutional Research, Human Resources Management (HRM) classes have high success, with the majority of students earning no less than a ‘B’ in their required courses.

Now that we have given you some facts about Business majors, it’s time to give you information about the different levels of Human Resources. HRM is large enough in scope that it allows for a number of job opportunities and one of them is sure to appeal to you.
Entry Level HR

One of the most common positions you will find fresh out of college will be the Human Resources Recruiter position. Attending career fairs while representing the company, hiring conferences and other recruiting events is what a HR recruiter will likely be doing.

People who work in HR have positive impacts on people within their organization. They offer help to the organization beyond the typical hiring process. People who work in HR have steady lifelong careers with a stable position. People in HR receive high levels of job satisfaction because of the opportunities to solve problems and help people. Also, HR is looked up to as the gatekeeper for newcomers, a feeling that is a reward of its own. (Erstad, W. 2015)

While some entry Level HR recruiter positions require a high school diploma or certificate and an Associate’s Degree in Human Resources Management, most HR positions will also require a Bachelor’s Degree, preferably in Business Administration with a focus in Human Resources or related fields. Psychology degrees are also common within HR departments. While the classes for a degree will teach you about HR topics, you will also need to educate yourself on some of the soft skills that are typical of the position. (Stone, D. 2015)

Skills & Qualifications

To excel in this position there are some skills that you will need to develop. Some of the most important skills are:

**Relationship Building:** Since you will usually be the first person that a potential candidate meets, it is your responsibility to be able to build a good relationship with them. You are the representative of your company. That makes relationship building a very important skill for your role as a HR recruiter.

**Listening Skills:** New candidates will be trying to sell themselves to you all of the time. It is important that you are able to listen closely and interpret any information that they may tell you quickly and efficiently.

**Consulting Skills:** You will have the responsibility of explaining programs, procedures and policies so make sure that your consulting skills are polished. Professional speaking regarding company policies is very important.
Personal Skills: Make sure to have a great personality, be personable and approachable. Sometimes people will be nervous when talking to new and that is natural. In order to help them be themselves it takes someone who knows how to have a comforting approach to a situation. The Society for Human Resource Management data reported, Entry level HR applicants need integrity, dependability, reliability and respect skills in this field. More than three-fourths of Entry Level HR professionals ranked reliability and dependability as two most important skills that applicants should have. The third one is integrity, followed by ability to work as a team. These skills include interpersonal communications, organizational skills, leadership and articulation. (Hoogvelt, 2012)

Salary
There are many perks of working as a Recruiter. Of course there is a decent salary range and you can expect it to be around $30,000 to $60,000, depending on what industry you provide your HR services in. According to payscale.com, A human resources (HR) recruiter earns an average salary of $47,408 per year or $16.90 per hour (“Salary:Human Resources Recruiter”, 2015)

There are many industries that utilize HR services. These industries include non-profit organizations, private practices or firms, state & local governments, federal governments, hospitals, colleges and universities, and franchisees. There is expected to be growth in the HR industry, so now would definitely be a good time to join. (Ingwersen, 2017)

Responsibilities
The Human Resources Recruiter oversees all facets of recruiting success throughout the corporation. According to resources.workable.com, these are some of the responsibilities of recruiters that will be expected in entry level HR positions.
- Design and implement overall recruiting strategy.
- Develop and update job descriptions and job specifications.
- Perform job and task analysis to document job requirements and objectives.
- Prepare recruitment materials and post jobs to appropriate job board/newspapers/colleges etc.
- Source and recruit candidates by using databases, social media etc.
- Screen candidates resumes and job application.
• Conduct interviews using various reliable recruiting and selection tools/methods to filter candidates within schedule.
• Assess applicants’ relevant knowledge, skills, soft skills, experience and aptitudes. (‘Recruiter job description’, 2017)

Pros and Cons of Entry Level HR:
Many top-level positions require years of job experience and number of skills that someone new to the field would not have. For those looking for paying job, instead of an unpaid internship, what is remain is an entry-level position, which may have its advantages and disadvantages.

Cons: Entry level HR positions are available to a wider group of people who are looking for the jobs, they tend to be more competitive than mid-level and senior-level HR position. Many people may be competing for entry level position, so additional qualifications can go a long way to getting these jobs.

Pros: Entry level HR positions tend to have less responsibility or at least more supervised by experienced employees. New employees will probably have a supervisor to help them, considering that they are new to the job. Starting a new job can be stressful in and of itself, however the additional instruction from more skillful and experienced managers and coworkers can act as a safety net.

Now is a good time to be headed into an HR career, because the industry is changing for the better. New organizations are forming, the industry is growing and opportunities are there for the taking. Entry level HR is a great place to start a career if you like people, a good salary and a great purpose of work.

Mid-Level HR
At this point in a human resources career, you have already concluded that this is the right path for you. It is important to reflect on the notion that although you are climbing the corporate ladder, the work entailed in a middle management position encourages more independence and responsibility; however, with the experience you have already garnered, the challenges should be welcomed. Below are some of the new responsibilities that come with leaving entry-level positions to achieve that higher title. There are several options
available in the HR field for those individuals taking that next step.

Although each title seems diverse enough for individual attention, many companies require their HR specialist to have knowledge pertaining to every position listed.

**Salary**

Before you delve into the responsibilities essential to your line of work—an HR specialist-- let us explore an important topic for many. *What compensation can I expect moving to the next tier of Human Resources?* Now this might not be as important as working in career you love, but it is definitely a factor in defining what to expect from the company you choose to work for.

Keep in mind that education, geographic location, experience, and the type of industry all play a role quantifying compensation and perks. In the section listed below, we will observe the approximate median average in the United States for each position per the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Here is a list of the salaries typical of middle career human resources:

- Generalist/Coordinator - the median pay for this field is within the range of $48,000 – 90,000.
- Training & Development - specialists can reach a median of $51,450.

- Benefits Specialist- median pay for this title is in the range of $43,340 – $70,130.
- Dispute Resolution Specialist - For this HR category, $52,770 per the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Qualifications**

It does not matter if you are applying to a local business or a Fortune 500 company, there are certain qualities that are simply expected of a HR professional. Take a look at a hiring ad for any level of Human Resources. You may find several qualities strikingly familiar to the ones at an entry-level job.

Soft skills are even more important now than at earlier stages of HR because you are overseeing those in the entry positions and reporting to the administrators. Interpersonal relationships are required to network within the field. If you feel the need to improve in any area, even if not mentioned above, utilize your position as tool to strengthen these qualities.

**Degrees Required**

A four-year degree (i.e. Bachelor's Degree with a focus in Human Resources) is typically the required minimum to be considered for a middle-career position. The level of degree you earn reflects the salary opportunities in the workforce. Any other experience is up to the discretion of the hiring party.
Responsibilities
Because you are exploring the middle tier of Human Resources, you must first understand the very idea. You are no longer a trainee in need of guidance from those in higher office, in fact, trainees now come to you for that authority. Middle tier serves as the bridge between fresh recruits and seasoned executives. You are the leader for the entry-levels and a mouthpiece for the administrators. As mentioned before, some of these responsibilities will overlap depending on the title, so knowing what to expect from each will help you utilize the skills you have honed in entry-level HR and make it work to your advantage.

Generalist: As an HR Generalist, you can expect to take part in recruiting potential employees for the company as well as all other general functions of human resources. This includes managing payroll, compensation, and benefits for employees. It is also a generalist’s responsibility to act as a consultant to advise both personnel and management alike.

Training & development: The cultivation of this aspect of Human Resources is crucial to company operations. Here, it is all about team building to the fullest to create a seamless workforce. It is your responsibility to boost the worker morale to increase production. To do so, you must equip them with the necessary knowledge and materials to achieve the company objectives. This involves setting up possible workplace scenarios in which trainees use problem solving techniques, establishing guides and video tutorials for daily operations, and on-the-job training.

Benefits Specialist: Specialists in this area are responsible for maintaining employee benefits. Typically, this job consists of creating desirable benefits packages catering to the company and workers alike. This is not all compensatory; it ranges from dental and vision to 401 K plans and retirement funds. OnlineHumanResources lists some of the responsibilities that will be expected of the role. These include:

- Evaluating and/or implementing all types of health benefits options such as on-site gyms and weight loss programs
- Researching and implementing non-cash methods to benefit employees such as 401 K plans and retirement funds
- Establishing and maintaining relationships with insurance companies in order to stay up to date on policies and offer employees the best possible options
- Explaining and researching benefit policies for employees
Appealing insurance decisions on the behalf of employees
Planning, implementing, and/or managing 401K’s, pensions, retirement funds and other non-cash, financial benefits
Work to offer benefits that prevent and treat environmental health issues that may be specific to one workplace or another, such as obesity or smoking
Constantly keeping informed about Federal and State guidelines, and updating policies to reflect the guidelines

Dispute Resolution Specialist: As mentioned in the name, this role deals with conflict resolution within a company. It is a specialized group, dedicating its efforts to planning for any unforeseen legal incidents that may arise, while maintaining the day-to-day issues of business. They act as an unbiased connection between separate parties, which means they possess legal knowledge in order to inform their contacts and evade lawsuits. Usually, these parties consist of employer/employee conflict, therefore, interpersonal skills are vital in resolving issues.

Pros and Cons of Mid Level HR:
Now that you are at the middle stages of your career it’s time to make the decision if you are content where you are or would like to further your career.

Pros:
You are at a higher level than an entry level position in HR, so rather than just recruiting or working on paperwork, you have more responsibilities, such as decision making authority, and you can make a bigger impact on the organization. Being in the middle has it’s cons because you have the opportunity to train entry level candidates, which will help sharpen your skills, but also learn from higher management, to help you with career advancement.

Cons:
Being mid career can be challenging because you aren’t at the bottom but you aren’t at the top either. You may encounter a lot of the same challenges as a senior level HR colleague but you don’t have the title just yet. If your goal is to become Senior level, keeping up with growing competition can be challenging in your mid career because you have to stand out amongst other people that want career advancement as well. Sometimes the quality of your working capital may not be enough, and according to wisestep (Sravani. "Top 22 Pros and Cons of a Career in Human Resources") there tends to be politics amongst higher level management which can be a hard hurdle to surpass upon moving up the corporate ladder.

Here are some things to consider if staying in mid level management is right for you.
Senior Level HR

Now that you know how to get into the HR industry, and know about the entry/mid-level positions in HR, let’s talk about the positions in upper management that you can look forward to. After obtaining Human Resources experience through roles like HR Assistant and HR Coordinator, the next positions in management are HR Manager, Director and Vice President of HR. For the purpose of providing an easy guideline, we will focus on the role of an HR Manager. So you may now be asking yourself, ‘Ok, but what is an HR Manager?’ Snagajob.com says that “Human Resources Managers are the leaders of a company’s human resources team.” (Snagajob, 2017). HR Managers coordinate the individuals who recruit and interview new employees (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). As part of top management, a Human Resources Managers works with executives to set codes of conduct for the company. Human Resource Managers also make sure that their team hires the best and brightest people possible, and is responsible for encouraging and motivating its HR staff.

Salary

Ever heard the phrase “the talking power of money”? Well, one of the reasons you should think about pursuing a career as an HR Manager is because of the pay. On average, HR Managers earned an annual $104,440, or $50.21 per hour, as of May 2015, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Forbes Magazine listed an HR Manager career as one of the best jobs to apply for in 2017 (Kauflin, 2017). The position ranked sixth out of fifty jobs with a job score of 4.6/5 and a job satisfaction rating of 3.8/5 (Kauflin, 2017). According to Glassdoor’s chief economist, Andrew Chamberlain, the HR Manager position has seen an increase in salary that’s well above average and there are more job openings for HR managers on Glassdoor than for any other role in the top five of the list (Kauflin, 2017). Chamberlain explains, “When you have a job seeker’s market with low unemployment like today, HR managers become essential to find the right talent and move people through hiring process.” (Kauflin, 2017).

Qualifications

By now, you may be asking what type of qualifications will I need to become an HR
Manager? Candidates need a combination of education and several years of related work experience to become a human resources manager. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, average work experience to become an HR manager is five years or more. Although a bachelor’s degree in finance, business management, education, or information technology is sufficient for most positions, upper-level positions like Manager, Director and VP of Human Resources require a master’s degree in human resources, labor relations, or business administration (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Additionally, management positions typically require an understanding of human resources programs, such as compensation and benefits plans; human resources databases like ADP, Ceridian, UltiPro; and federal, state, and local employment laws (Snagajob, 2017).

As a leader and advisor to many groups of people, such as employees and executives, it is very important that a Human Resources Manager has fully developed communication, leadership and decision-making skills. Managers are expected to resolve most employee issues if their staff cannot and knowing how to solve them is what sets their role apart from the staff (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

Responsibilities

The HR manager leads the ongoing development of the Human Resources department. An HR manager leads an organization’s HR programs and policies as they apply to employee relations, compensation, benefits, safety, performance and staffing levels. In order for the HR staff to effectively guide employees within the organization with their questions about policies and benefits, it is the HR manager’s role to oversee the information that the staff is transmitting to the employee. This helps HR managers build culture and values that are important for developing overall administration, coordination and evaluation of the human resource function.

Duties & Responsibilities:

- HR managers typically plan and coordinate an organization’s workforce to best use employee’s talents.
- Link an organization’s management with its employees.
- Plan and oversee employee benefit programs.
- Serve as a consultant with other managers advising them on human resource issues.
- Coordinate and supervise the work of specialists and support staff.
- Oversee an organization’s recruitment, interview, selection, and hiring processes.
Lastly, handle any staffing issues, such as mediating disputes and directing disciplinary procedures. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). The HR manager is closely involved in decision, implementation, and review. Without human resource management responsibilities, a business cannot be successful to achieve the organization’s strategic planning as an efficient HR manager.

Pros and Cons of Senior Level HR:

Cons: HR managers encounter enormous workloads and serve as a mediator to satisfy the demands of this career path.

Pros: HR managers have an attractive earning potential. HR managers are needed in most industries because of their direct impact on its employees and the company. (Snagajob, 2017)

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of human resources managers is projected to grow 9 percent till 2024, which is faster than the average for all occupations (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

Every company has its own human resource department that handles every employee problem relating to job satisfactions and productivity. A career in human resources is a compelling career choice for those who enjoy managing positive employee relations. As an HR manager, you will be in charge of different jobs that will have a direct impact on business performance of a company. Overall, this means HR managers coordinate the most efficient workforce possible that will help an organization shape its future and earn profits in the future.
Works Cited:


