

Human Resources

Business English Unit

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Understanding the role of Human Resources

When businesses have plans to improve themselves, or simply have a vacancy, the manager usually calls in a specialist to find new talents. That specialist is the HR, or Human Resources, Manager.

HR staff kick into action and start the search for interested recruits. Recruiting is a huge part of making great teams. From the group of wannabes, HR staff use their knowledge and experience to find the best person for the job.

HR managers are a vital link in the company's overall structure, making sure that the people match the company's purpose. But Human Resources staff do much more than finding stars for the team. They provide expert advice to managers about how they can improve their team's performance and suggest training options to optimise staff potential.

HR staff also monitor wellbeing, address grievances, look after safety needs and sometimes act as intermediaries in a conflict. Both sides need HR when differences arise.

And, importantly, they make sure people get paid fairly. They then follow up to make sure that when job requirements change, so does the pay.

Keeping capable staff saves time and money in the long run so HR managers play a big part in staff retention. In a big company, helping people along a successful career path is part of this responsibility.

HR managers can make a big difference when they connect the right people. They help shape the business by facilitating change, and everyone benefits.

HR experts are employed all over the world, which allows for great overseas employment opportunities.

Vocabulary list:

vacancy wannabes vital optimise wellbeing intermediaries
arise capable retention facilitating grievances

Task:

Which of the following would you expect an HR manager to do? (Tick FIVE answers)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit new talent into the company. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure employees get a pay rise where appropriate. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Find ways to encourage employees to stay with the company. | <input type="checkbox"/> Find locations to set up new branches. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure important documents are stored safely. | <input type="checkbox"/> Manage the Sales Team. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help when there is a disagreement between a manager and a sales team. | <input type="checkbox"/> Find ways to improve production. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suggest training courses for employees to attend. | <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare statements for the press. |

Listening Task:

Listen and fill in the blanks.

(Audio at <http://roadtogrammar.com/units/business2/listening.html>)

- 1 Recruiting is a _____ part of making _____ teams.
- 2 HR managers are a _____ link in the company's _____ structure.
- 3 They suggest training _____ to optimise staff _____.
- 4 Keeping _____ staff saves time and money in the long _____.
- 5 They help _____ the business by _____ change.



Vocabulary Task:

Fill in the blanks with the words from the box

arises grievances capable
vacancy optimise

- 1 We have a _____ in Accounting if you're interested.
- 2 We can _____ our space by using smaller cubicles.
- 3 If the opportunity _____, you should show him your plans.
- 4 Impress the boss by showing him what you're _____ of.
- 5 The manager listened carefully to the employee's _____.



Using a GERUND as the subject of a sentence

1 A GERUND is a word ending in –ING that functions as a noun. We can use a gerund as the subject of a sentence. Here are some examples from the text we read:

Recruiting is a huge part of making great teams.

Keeping capable staff saves time and money in the long run

Helping people along a successful career path is part of this responsibility

2 Using a gerund as the subject of a sentence is a good way to vary your sentence structures and make your writing more interesting.

3 Remember not to add an extra subject, the phrase containing the gerund is equivalent to 'it':

Correct: Learning a language takes time.

Incorrect: Learning a language it takes time.

4 Be sure that the verb matches the subject:

Wrong: Taking my kids to the park didn't have time to stop for ice cream.

Right: Taking my kids to the park was a wonderful experience.

The first example is wrong because the subject should be a PERSON, not an ACTIVITY:

Right: When I took my kids to the park, I didn't have time to stop for ice cream.

Task:

1 Which sentence is correct?

- A| Working hard, it will help you succeed.
- B| Working hard will help you succeed.
- C| Working hard so it will help you succeed.

2 Which sentence is correct?

- A| Learning a language takes time.
- B| Learning a language take time.
- C| Learning a language it takes time.

3 Which sentence is correct?

- A| Shouting at the staff only it makes the situation worse.
- B| Shouting at the staff only making the situation worse.
- C| Shouting at the staff only makes the situation worse.

4 Which sentence is correct?

- A| Dealing with the press that left Brian exhausted.
- B| Dealing with the press left Brian exhausted.
- C| Dealing with the press to leave Brian exhausted.

5 Which sentence is correct?

- A| Taking your kids to the zoo is a good way to teach them about animals.
- B| Taking your kids to the zoo this is a good way to teach them about animals.
- C| Taking your kids to the zoo to teach them about animals.

6 Which sentence is correct?

- A| Offering training to employees and helping with staff retention.
- B| Offering training to employees to help with staff retention.
- C| Offering training to employees helps with staff retention.

7 In which sentence is the gerund the subject?

- A| Looking around, she quickly felt overwhelmed.
- B| Looking around took more time than she had expected.
- C| Looking around, she decided there was nothing she wanted.

8 In which sentence is the gerund the subject?

- A| Flying first class for once, Brenda felt like a queen.
- B| Bringing in more customers means making more cash.
- C| Looking around the room, I saw several hostile faces.

9 Which sentence is correct?

- A| Looking for a new secretary didn't like any of the candidates.
- B| Renting a car couldn't find the model I wanted.
- C| Communicating with people in the office can be hard.

Group Discussion

Discuss the following questions:

- 1 Would you like to work in HR? Why or why not?
- 2 A small company may not have an HR department. How do they recruit, train and manage human resources?
- 3 What is the most difficult part of working in an HR department?
- 4 Describe your last job interview.
- 5 What kind of staff training have you had? What kind of training would you like to have?



Answer Key:

Reading

Which of the following would you expect an HR manager to do?

- Recruit new talent into the company.
- Find ways to encourage employees to stay with the company.
- Help when there is a disagreement between a manager and a sales team.
- Suggest training courses for employees to attend.
- Ensure employees get a pay rise where appropriate.

Listening

- 1 Recruiting is a **huge** part of making **great** teams.
- 2 HR managers are a **vital** link in the company's **overall** structure.
- 3 They suggest training **options** to optimise staff **potential**.
- 4 Keeping **capable** staff saves time and money in the long **run**
- 5 They help **shape** the business by facilitating **change**.

Vocabulary

- 1 We have a **vacancy** in Accounting if you're interested.
- 2 We can **optimise** our space by using smaller cubicles.
- 3 If the opportunity **arises**, you should show him your plans.
- 4 Impress the boss by showing him what you're **capable** of.
- 5 The manager listened carefully to the employee's **grievances**.

Grammar and Language

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 B | 4 B | 7 B |
| 2 A | 5 A | 8 B |
| 3 C | 6 C | 9 C |

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