

## **NEW AVENUE TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: GO GREEN**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

HRM is the most challenging and exciting area within the management. In the turbulent times, the value of the HRM functions is gaining increasing importance in managing organizations uniqueness of any organizations dependent on its human capital. Converting high strung young technologists to managers is not an easy task. Across the globe, we are moving from an industrial-based financial system to a talent based economy. We are also entering a green economy – one in which consumer and employee expectations and future environmental change will require businesses to address “green” There is a growing need for the integration of environmental management into Human Resource Management (HRM) – Green HRM issues, HR can have a significant impact on the broader green agenda. For services-oriented business in particular, employee focused green initiatives can be extremely impactful since the workforce is often the largest single contributor to waste and pollution. Although green initiatives are often supported by an operations group, HR can also play a role in reviewing how the business works and identify how people can act differently in order to reduce their use of energy. Green management initiatives become an important factor in forward-thinking businesses around the world. Researchers argued that employees must be inspired, empowered and environmentally aware of greening in order to carry out green management initiatives. Corporate green management requires a high level of technical and management skills in employees.

### **What is Green HR**

The term ‘green HR’ is most often used to refer to the contribution of people management policies and practices towards the broader corporate environmental agenda. This central system is connected to all HR-related processes. A notable feature is that employees and managers interact directly with the HRMS through self-service functionality, which eliminates the delay, inaccuracies, and inefficiencies of a paper-bound system. Typical green activities include video recruiting, or the use of online and video interviews, to minimize travel requirements. Green rewards can include the use of workplace and lifestyle benefits, ranging from carbon credit offsets to free bicycles, to engage people in the green agenda, while continuing to recognize their contribution. While many employees often feel it is their responsibility to protect the environment while they are at work, the new workforce of millennials is emphasizing environmental consciousness as they chose their employers. There is also a broader opportunity to engage the workforce given that more and more people seek meaning and self-actualization in their jobs.

**Sustainability and a Greener Reputation**

Even a casual observer of social trends would recognize the increased attention given to environmental issues in the last 20 years. The environment issue is the subject of an ongoing national conversation, debated daily in the news and in state and federal government. The Millennial Generation—the next generation of employees, job candidates, and customers—was raised online and is socially connected. Many of these younger people dedicate themselves to good environmental stewardship.

**HR Processes Involved In Green HRM****Recruitment-Online Applicant Tracking And Recruiting**

HR managers can locate and recruit better qualified candidates for open positions. Positions are posted online, and resumes and applications are also received electronically. In that format, they can be searched and filtered for the appropriate skill set. Resumes and applications can then be routed to management for further review. Some systems can even help schedule candidate interviews and, if approved, transmit the offer letter. If the candidate is employed by the company, the resume and application are then stored in the new electronic personnel file.

- Green job descriptions for employees (and green goals included into managerial job descriptions)
- Graduate perceptions of Green practices (applicants use green criteria)
- Recruitment of employees who are 'Green aware' becomes part of the interview schedule
- Green employer branding (green employer of choice)
- Green aspects introduced to the induction process (familiarization)

Other HR benefits, like increased staff motivation and/or engagement, reductions in labour turnover, and increasing workforce health.

**Performance Management (PM) and Performance Appraisal (PA)**

Using Performance Management (PM) in Environmental Management (EM) presents the challenges of how to measure environmental performance standards across different units of the firm, and gaining useful data on the environmental performance of managers (TUSDAC, 2005: 42). Firms like Amoco in the United States (U.S.) have tackled them by installing corporate-wide environmental performance standards (which cover on-site use, waste management, environmental audits, and the reduction of waste) to measure environmental performance standards, and developing green information systems and audits (to gain useful data on managerial environmental performance), which includes a green audit programme that contains field audits –which are seen as important, as they can give employees a mechanism by which they can raise any recurring problems, and gain information and feedback on past and future environmental performance of their firm One way in which PM systems can be successfully initiated in an organization is to develop performance indicators for each risk area in environmental awareness and education.

**Training and Development**

Training seems to be one area where the role of HRM in environmental management has been recognized for some time (as job rotation) provides a useful way to train Green executives or future Board members in EM, and is seen as a crucial part of successful environmental programmes many firms should begun training initiatives where training objectives are linked to their vision regarding regulatory compliance (TUSDAC, 2005: 42)..Training in organizations in EM should involve regulatory requirements, employee awareness, and Training on Environmental Quality Management (TQEM) use of environmental training practices include the need to counter employee cynicism associated with such programmes; to evaluate their effectiveness; to communicate with and gain feedback from external regulatory stakeholders; and how to deliver such training in terms of cost and learning .environmental approach requires increases in employee awareness and knowledge of process and materials, and employee skills – meaning employees need ‘integrating training’ – and for employees to show an emotional involvement to attain objectives. They note that whilst some studies show a relationship between level of employee training and level of environmental development.

**Employee Administration**

The employee self-service feature of the system performs many routine HR functions while keeping sensitive employee data safe and secure. The HR manager can determine how workforce data is distributed based on the security profile of each user. With these security protocols in place, the system allows employees to initiate requests for time off and training, review their payroll history, see what benefits they signed up for, access company policies, and much more.

**Employment Relations**

Employee Involvement (EI) and Participation (EP)

A number of rationales for using Employee Involvement (EI) teams in EM include the ideas that they can cut waste (as employees are seen to have the most knowledge of the work processes and products involved); can manage such complex work well; and that using them helps build employee pride and commitment in their work. Using EI in the EM domain is not only seen as changing how work processes are performed ,but also in terms of improving worker health and safety too.

**Grievance and Discipline**

In general terms, grievance and discipline in EM has seen few firms following the lead of the British firm National Westminster Bank in encourage internal ‘whistle blowing regarding environmental breaches. The need to raise grievances is seen in high risk operations (for their safety record), and it is logical that in such cases disciplinary procedures are attached to environmental rules and duties where noncompliance occurs (Wehrmeyer, 1996). Indeed, expert legal opinion is that some firms may eventually move to ensure that environmental obligations are secured by including clauses in staff contracts to do so, i.e. that environmentally unfriendly behavior may constitute a breach of contract and therefore possible grounds for dismissal (Brockett, 2006).

**The HR Role**

There may be differences in opinion in terms of the views of HR managers, and their approach to EM concerns. These can be classified into a number of different roles that HR managers may take-up in EM, each revealing their own possible origins and future directions. A key role for HR environmental executives is to guide line managers in terms of gaining full staff co-operation towards implementing environmental policies (Wehrmeyer and Parker, 1996), which means HR need to 'seek out allies, nurture supporters and create networks of problem-solvers willing to act to change the status quo' (Hart, 1996). HR can link HRM and EM together in an integrated way. The HR department at the U.K. arm of Sky has overseen a campaign to turn off PCs, TVs and lights when leaving, to use 100 per cent renewable energy, and introducing solar lighting (Davies and Smith, 2007), while other British organizations, HR at first direct highlight their travel policy which promotes car sharing and the increasing use of public transport (Simms, 2007), and Boots have reduced car journeys by 20per cent via their green transport plan, and established an intranet scheme for carpooling (Davies and Smith, 2007). In addition, HR systems such as e-HR are seen to be able to help management and employees track their own carbon emissions (Beechinor, 2007)

**Going green creates jobs in India**

India is expecting to create one million jobs in the rapidly expanding green energy sector in the next two years, say experts. These "green jobs" will provide employment opportunities for diverse groups of people such as lawyers, policy writers, business risk analysts, architects and engineers, to name a few.

According to the Economic Times, more businesses are going green due to increasing environmental awareness. Because of this, jobs will be "transformed and created into the future", says Kamal Meattle, promoter of GreenSpaces and CEO of the Paharpur Business Centre and Software Technology Incubator Park.

However, one problem with the influx of new jobs is that India may not have the expertise required to fill them. Meattle further said that "the future looks like it could be brighter, except that in our excitement we forget that we will need thousands of skilled people to build a bridge to our new carbon-free world. Put simply, there are neither the trainers, facilities or financing to skill the labour force we urgently need."

**CONCLUSION**

The concept of improving efficiency by using an Human Resource Management Service is not new to HR professionals. What's evolving is the increased corporate focus on sustainability and green initiatives. Recent studies suggest this issue will be a persistent component of future business plans. As companies respond to the demands of their customers, investors, employees, and other stakeholders, green practices will become a regular way of doing business. For the HR department, using their technology to go paperless is a great way to support company objectives and set a positive example for the rest of the organization. The benefits are clear: lower costs, a better corporate image, and improved productivity in the HR department. Equally clear is the feasibility of implementing an HRMS—going green is definitely within the organizations reach.

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