

## Why choose a career in HR?

My decision to join the HR profession was in no way an accident or a Plan B. I still remember from my early education an ambition to work within a HR environment where I felt I could make a true difference to both employees and a business by working with individuals to educate, open communication channels and build a knowledge sharing environment in which it was a pleasure to work.

I think there is very much a love/hate view of HR departments and professionals and many individuals still consider HR to be a part of the administration of a business. However today the modern HR department is the place where business strategies are conceived, where culture and corporate social responsibility is developed and where recruitment and development strategies are put into action.

David Ulrich of Dattner Consulting has said that "HR should not be defined by what it does but by what it delivers – results that enrich the organisation's value to customers, investors and employees". This is the ultimate goal for any HR department; to provide a service to the business and internal and external customers which enhances and adds value to the daily operation of the business as well as developing future aspirations.

One of the reasons I truly find HR to be so full of opportunities and so exciting is there is such little routine in human resources work. There is always new employment legislation that needs to be studied, there are constant changes in industries that one has to learn and needs to adapt to, and there are always jobs evolving and professionals evolving with them, needing appropriate professional development. The opportunities for learning and development both professionally and personally within just some of the areas above are phenomenal and offer a truly exciting career prospect.

So what would I say are they key characteristics an individual needs in order to succeed in a career in HR? One has to have a real interest in other people's careers and their development both professionally and personally, and have a desire to commit to the core culture of an organisation and work on improving that culture continuously.

HR is not necessarily an intuitive kind of work, and you definitely need to be a people person in every context to embrace the full opportunities which can be afforded in such a role. It is the kind of work that requires one to perfect thought processes, to keep abreast of new events and developments in the workforce, and to challenge intellectual assumptions about human behaviours and the reasons that lead to those behaviours in both an individual and organisational context.

The future for HR is a challenging one given the current economic climate, however HR's fundamental purpose-to build a positive, productive workplace-remains unchanged.

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