altHR

Becoming a Modern HR Expert in Malaysia

— in Less Than 10 Pages

TABLE OF
CONTENTS

In today's fast-moving digital world, the role of HR has grown in importance (and difficulty), while evolving from an operations-based one into a much wider scope. Recent years have seen significant changes in the way workforces are — and should be — managed, with the modern organisation now made up of multi-generational talents with different demands, requirements, and wants.

In 2022 and into 2023, the working world has also changed drastically. HR practitioners are now faced with increasingly challenging situations on a daily basis. One thing remains the same, however — it's hugely important to keep your employees happy, engaged, and empowered if you're to achieve business success.

Are you an HR manager, practitioner, or simply an employer with a hands-on approach to managing the workforce? Whether you're new to HR — or you're simply looking to stay up to date with the latest best practices — here are a couple of tips to becoming a modern HR expert in Malaysia.

The best part? We'll get you there in under 10 pages.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF HR

The human resources department is, of course, an essential component of any organisation. Whether you're operating in a small, even micro-sized company, or you're a decision-maker at an enterprise-sized corporate organisation, HR plays a vital role in managing the workforce.

Traditionally, the role of the HR department can be broadly divided into the following responsibilities:

- ◦ Employee management
- ◦ Remuneration, benefits, and perks
- ◦ Workplace management
- ◦ Compliance
- ◦ Learning & development

It's also common for smaller firms to outsource some responsibilities (or even the entire role of HR) to external vendors, with many HR practitioners overwhelmed with the sheer amount of administrative tasks that are a part of the day-to-day.

Meanwhile, larger companies have HR departments that can even have a headcount surpassing the entire workforce of SMEs, although this also comes with increased responsibilities and, potentially, even more paperwork due to certain policies that may be in place.

The downside of this: repetitive, menial tasks can detract HR professionals from focusing on other things that matter, such as overall HR strategy, modernising the workforce, and empowering employees.

altHR

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISION & PURPOSE IN HR

When talking about overall HR strategy, the first thing that HR professionals must focus on is the company's vision and goals, and consequently, the type of culture that you want to build at the organisation. That's because a strong corporate culture has an impact on everything — ranging from employee morale, all the way to branding and overall the reputation of the company.

According to studies done by McKinsey, companies with a strong purpose-driven vision stand to generate long term value. As a result, these companies have a greater chance of improved employee engagement, stronger relationships with customers, and ultimately, better performance as a whole for the business.

While a company's overall vision, values, and goals are usually dictated by the overall senior management, the modern HR decision-maker assumes the responsibility of ensuring that the organisation lives its purpose and values on a daily basis.

These can even include HR initiatives such as mental health-focused moves such as the introduction of mental health days for many companies in the startup industry and other progressive and forward-looking initiatives.

altHR

Instead, cultivate a purpose-driven culture on a daily basis with employees by focusing on the employee empowerment, and you'll stand to reap benefits including:

- **Business resilience:** In tough times, you need employees who feel united with the company's overall values. A purpose-driven culture helps to build this resilience, with a study even finding that purpose-driven businesses are 63% more likely to be able to withstand economic downturns.

- **Better retention and recruiting:** As mentioned earlier, one of the key goals for HR professionals is to ensure that the company is hiring the best talents for the team — while retaining and improving their best employees. Purpose is a "core differentiator", as explained by Delloite, which can lead to improved retention rates of up to 40%.

- **Future-proofed employer branding:** Nothing can truly be future-proof, but cultivating a sense of purpose into your work culture will ensure that the company remains as attractive as ever to the modern professional. In fact, this study found that more than half of millennials would reject a job offer without a clear indication of a company's values, while individuals born after 1997 (Gen Zs) reportedly prioritise "meaningful" work, as well as organisations that share their values.

From the points above, you'll notice that a lot is said about keeping employees happy and motivated. This also falls under the umbrella of Employee Experience (EX) — which a similar metric to the commonly-mentioned Customer Experience (CX).

EX simply covers the overall experience that an individual has at an organisation, ranging from the very first time an individual comes across a job ad, all the way through years (or even decades) at the company, and then the moment they are offboarded. As such, it's crucial to ensure that employees have a positive experience through all stages of the employee lifecycle — this will give the organisation the edge in a very competitive market.

With studies showing that companies that prioritise the employee experience generally outperform competitors by nearly 1.5 times, here are a couple of tips to get you started on designing a powerful, positive employee experience:

1.   Streamline your communication and way of work

Ensuring that you have streamlined communication processes systems ensures that your house is in order from day 1. This is critical to a successful employee experience, with improved communication and continuity allowing for better collaboration and less wasted time (and other resources) between employees.

Some examples of this include automating processes such as payroll, attendance, leave management, and more, which can reduce downtime for employees with self-service alternatives. Put it this way: if everything works together as one smoothly oiled machine, employees will have a better overall experience — translating to improved overall performance.

2.   Offer opportunities to upskill & improve

The employer-employee relationship should be considered to be a mutually beneficial one, which means that you'll need to think about the company's role in empowering employees' careers. In today's competitive job market, there are plenty of opportunities to upskill and reskill for many professionals, with options available via online learning platforms, part-time certifications, and more.

However, opportunities to gain experience on the job and upskill are equally, if not more beneficial. An example of this would be mentorship programmes, where employees who need/want to learn something new can be "attached" to another individual — who may also learn something in return.

You can also introduce cross-department experiences, although this may depend on the nature of your company's industry, or even the nature of the individual jobs in question. But when possible, these experience can help individuals to upskill, stay relevant, and ultimately, bring more value to the organisation as a whole.

3.   Stay flexible

Flexibility is a very important aspect of managing the modern workforce, with 6 in 10 Malaysians preferring to have flexible work arrangements — a trend that is reflected on a global scale. Flexibility doesn't necessarily mean that the entire workforce works remotely, however, with many companies now implementing hybrid work models that combine the best of both worlds.

Meanwhile, flexibility also allows companies to reap the benefits of a global talent pool, while it can also help in attracting the best talents. Again, it's important to stress that flexible work models do not work for everyone — but it's certainly a positive for the employee experience, where possible.

Additionally, it is also paramount to stay flexible to meet employees' needs. The ability to receive and understand feedback is a hugely powerful tool in the modern HR expert's repertoire. Through regular pulse surveys, more frequent performance reviews, and cultivating transparent and open dialogues between management and employees, you'll be able to gain insight into what employees really want.

At the end of the day, you'll need to offer a flexible and inclusive culture that can cater to the demands of employees — regardless of background, age, or any other factors. Always keep in mind that individual employees all have distinct requirements, which is why this feedback loop should be a continuous process (and not something to be done on rare, annual occasions).

As the pandemic has shown, it's important to future-proof the organisation from any potential obstacles that may or may not occur in the future. As we like to say here at altHR, it's important to build this digital resilience with the right digital tools. This can range from automation software, cloud-based drives, collaborative tools, and other digital tools that are becoming must-haves in the digital era (read more about that here).

The most important tool for the modern HR expert, however, is a powerful, all-inclusive Human Resources Management Software (HRMS). Each solution will come with its own pros and cons, although a good tip is to find an option that encompasses everything on a single platform — this will reduce the need for multiple systems, which can actually worsen the situation.

Here are some key features to look out for:

- Core HR: Leave management, payroll, expense claims, time-tracking, and more

- Employee engagement: Daily pulse surveys, collaborative calendars, announcement features, centralised directories
- Perks & benefits management: Flexible benefits management and Earned Wage Access (EWA)

- Safety and security: Be sure to shop for a solution that is secure. Employee data is confidential, so it's important to have a digitally-secure option

When looking for the right HRMS, you'll need to keep in mind the various needs and wants of your organisation, and whether the tool will be a good fit. Once you've chosen the right HR app, you can build upon that digital foundation with some of the tools suggested here.

Which brings us to…

EMPOWERING MODERN HR EXPERTS & WORKFORCES WITH ALTHR

The points above should get you started on becoming a modern HR expert in Malaysia — but you must have the right help. A powerful HRMS is a must-have element in any successful digital-ready business — but powerful doesn't need to be complicated, with Digi's super app, altHR designed to be comprehensive, yet user-friendly for both employers and employees.

Designed to help businesses in Malaysia survive, and thrive in 2022 (and beyond), altHR has undoubtedly become essential for organisations of all sizes looking to successfully navigate the new normal, and the digital era.

With a wide range of modules ranging from core HR functions such as Leaves and Expenses to Time Tracking and Rostering, the super app even comes with add-on features that truly help to take your HR to the next level. This includes modules such as Performance Management for regular employee appraisals, Spaces for check-ins and occupancy monitoring for communal spaces in the workplace, and much, much more.

The best part? altHR is a continually evolving product, one that has a stated aim of empowering Malaysian businesses to do what they do best — leave the nitty gritty to us.

Ready to go digital with altHR? Click here to find out more

altHR