

4

Human Resource Management

In this chapter you will cover:

- Human resource management
- Flexible organisations
- The human resource planning process
- HRM theories

This chapter aims to provide an overview of human resource management (HRM) for festivals and events. Theories of HRM will be discussed in order to identify the prime methods and techniques which can help event managers to develop the necessary skills and attitudes to deal with employees in the workplace. In Japan, the recognition that people should be seen as a key resource within strategic plans changed attitudes to employment and resulted in improving the quality of Japanese products and business practices, which allowed Japan to challenge for industrial dominance. This example suggests that people are indeed the key asset of any organisation, and that the management of people has to be at the heart of any strategic issue rather than a necessary inconvenience.

Human Resource Management

Over the last hundred years or so human resource management (HRM) has become a distinct feature in organisations. HRM has its origins in studies of Japanese firms undertaken by American academics interested in the development of the Japanese manufacturing industry. They discovered that Japanese personnel policies revolved around performance, motivation, flexibility and mobility (Blyton and Turnbull, 1992).

HRM is about how people are employed, managed and developed in organisations (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020: 3).

According to Krulis-Randa, HRM involves the following characteristics:

A focus on horizontal authority and reduced hierarchy; a blurring of the rigid distinction between management and non-management.

Whenever possible, responsibility for people management is devolved to line managers – the role of the personnel professional is to support and facilitate in this task and not to control it.

Human resource planning is proactive and compound with corporate planning; human resource issues are treated strategically in an integrated manner.

Employees are viewed as subjects with a potential for growth and development; the purpose of HRM is to identify this potential and develop it in line with the adaptive needs of the organisation.

HRM suggests that management and non-management have a common interest in the success of the organisation. Its purpose is to ensure that all employees are aware of this and committed to common goals. (1990: 136)

Whatever the characteristics of HRM in event organisations, the planning process for human resources needs to be carried out carefully in order to fulfil the needs of the different types of event organisations. Over the last few decades, the events industry has matured, creating employment for the local community through hosting mega-events. The local economy of many cities depends on the events industry to create jobs, and it creates economic and social benefits for the host community. Xia states that human resources planning plays a vital role for the local community and is an important area for mega-events organisers to develop, especially in planning for volunteer recruitment. It is a key part of the planning process to formulate and implement HRM during mega-events:

Human resource planning is very important for the mega events industry. It aims to forecast the demand and supply of manpower, and requires evolving plans to suit both demand and supply. (Xia, 2017: 70)

Flexible organisations

A *pulsating* organisation is one whose workforce increases and decreases with demand. This means that the organisation must be flexible, with a core of permanent workers and a periphery of other staff. The peripheral nature of a temporary workforce will create its own management issues.

In a corporate hospitality organisation, for example, the changing numbers of temporary staff used means that the organisation will be active and therefore flexible. Flexibility can be considered in two ways: functionally flexible labour and numerically flexible labour (Goss, 1994).

Functional flexibility

Functional flexibility allows employees who are multi-skilled to perform various jobs and roles. A corporate hospitality organisation will operate with both functional and numerical flexibility due to the fluctuations in its labour demands. Functional flexibility could refer to an employee who, in the lead-up to the event,

is responsible for logistical operations but during the event is required to perform as a section manager because their prior role has been completed.

Numerical flexibility

Numerical flexibility in terms of events refers to the many agency staff employed solely for an event's duration, and not required before and after the event.

The fact that numerically flexible staff are employed for short periods raises issues of how to achieve maximum output from them, how to build effective relationships and how to have high service levels.

4

The human resource planning process

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020, p.5) the goals of HRM are to:

- Support the organisation in achieving its objectives by developing and implementing HR strategies which are integrated with the event strategy
- Contribute to the development of a high-performance culture
- Ensure the organisation has the talented, skilled and energised people it needs
- Maintain a positive employment relationship between management and employees
- Provide for a satisfactory employee experience
- Further the well being of employees as major stakeholders
- Develop strategies to achieve these goals.

■ Human resource strategy

Many activities are involved at this stage of events management, including job analysis and job descriptions.

Job analysis

Job analysis is a very important part of this stage of the HR planning process. It includes defining a job in terms of specific tasks and responsibilities and identifying the abilities, skills and qualifications needed to perform it successfully.

The level of the job analysis process will be different from event to event; however, some small-scale events that depend on volunteers may simply attempt to match people to the tasks in which they have expressed an interest. Under these conditions, it is nevertheless still important to consider factors such as skills, experience and the physical abilities of the volunteers.

Job description

This is another result of the job analysis process that you need to be familiar with if you are to effectively match people (both employees and volunteers) to jobs. A job description is a statement identifying why a job has come into existence, what the holder of the job will do, and under what conditions the job is to be conducted. Case study 4.1 outlines the Event Manager job role description.

Case study 4.1: Event manager job role description

The event manager responsibilities include organising and implementing the event. This is a critical role because the event manager is responsible for overseeing and delivering an event that will make an impact on attendees and ensure it is successful and cost effective for stakeholders, and is delivered within the given time. In the events industry, the manager plays a key role in managing the process from planning, right through to carrying out the post-event evaluation, but most importantly, the event manager is responsible for running a whole event from start to finish. It is vital for managers to have following qualities and skills.

Responsibilities

- Plan events from start to finish according to requirements set out in their objectives
- Manage a team of staff and volunteers
- Produce and develop detailed proposals for events (including timelines, venues, suppliers, legal obligations, staffing and budgets)
- Develop ideas for event planning
- Research venues, suppliers and contractors, then negotiate prices and hire
- Prepare budgeting and costing for the event
- Negotiate and hire personnel (DJs, security, cleaners, waiters, volunteers etc.)
- Coordinate all operations of the event from start to finish
- Lead promotional and marketing activities for the event
- Supervise all staff (event coordinators, security personnel, caterers, volunteers etc.)
- Approve all aspects activities of the of the event
- Make sure that insurance, legal, health and safety obligations are followed properly
- Analyse and implement the event's success and prepare reports
- Produce post-event evaluation reports for stakeholders and clients

Requirements

- Proven experience as event manager
- Skilled in project management
- IT skills and proficient in MS Office
- Outstanding communication and negotiation ability
- Excellent organisational and interpersonal skills
- An ability for problem-solving
- Customer-service orientation
- A team player with leadership skills
- BSc/BA in Events Management PR, Marketing, Hospitality Management, Tourism Management or a related field is preferred