

POWERING THROUGH

Alexander R. Petsch, CEO, Spring Messe Management, a company based in Germany that organises HR exhibitions in different countries explains below why the concept of 'HR empowerment' will take time to be implemented:

1. RETHINK: In order to empower HR for more important functions, besides administrative, the management has to revise their thinking. They have no practical experience in sales, production or distribution and they lack sound practical management experience. This is one reason why sometimes HR is not able to sell its services well within the company. Hence, the management often underestimates HR's valuable knowledge.

2. REALISE: Most companies discuss the role of HR as a business partner but don't know how to marry HR needs with that of the management's. What are the tasks shouldered by a business-partner, which functions the company should leave to special 'competence centres', under what situation should a 'shared service centre', a team that offers a common service provision of routine HR activities be used and how can HR bring value to the table, are a few questions lurking on their minds.

3. REVISE: For HR to be taken seriously by the management, they have to deliver reliable figures. However, since the resource of human capital often isn't measured due to lack of adequate controlling instruments, HR struggles to be accepted.

But Petsch also provides three ways through which the role of HR can be empowered:

1. PARTNER: A business partnership is only possible if HR is given the decision-making power and for that, it should be represented in the highest executive committees including the board of the directors.

2. POSITION: For the HR department to have more capacities for new strategies, administrative tasks should, if possible, be transferred to shared service centres.

3. PRACTICE: Empowering HR also means strengthening their skills and expertise to face bigger challenges. New trainees need solid economic qualifications and should have very good social skills. Business knowledge is a must, as well as basic knowledge of the respective operations. Unfortunately, university education does, up to this day, not meet these requirements. Hence a stronger orientation towards further education is crucial.

ds that he will focus on
skilling his HR staff,
pecially around business
mpetencies, and drive greater
pecialisation in the team.
dreas Kuhn, CEO, know.ch
3, a consulting firm based in
t. Gallen, Switzerland, that
pecialises in HR key figures
enchmarking and employee
atisfaction surveys has quick
uggestions for organisations
ho take HR empowerment
eriously: 1. Employ specialised
R managers and not
dministrators. 2. Stop
ommunicating top
management decisions through

HR. Use a corporate
communication function
instead, and 3. Measure HR
initiatives with clear targets, like
number of candidates hired,
success quotient of a training
programme and other key
figures and force them to
measure their activities.

It will take a while for Indian
organisations to implement the
philosophy of HR empowerment
in their organisations. But
experts claim that sooner or
later, it's bound to happen!

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