

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES: DIMENSIONS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Dr Ruchi

Extension Lecturer,

Department of Commerce, Government College for Women, Rohtak

Human resource development strategies contributes to winning employee commitment, motivation and devotion in creating a self disciplined workforce and responsive organization. The objective of the present study is to explain human resource development strategies for achieving the mission and objectives of the organization.

Human Resource Development System

Systems Theory is an interdisciplinary field, which studies systems as a whole. It sees the world in terms of 'systems', where each system is a 'whole' that is more than the sum of its parts, but also itself a 'part' of larger systems. It emphasizes that real systems are open to, and interact with their environments, and that they can acquire qualitatively new properties through emergence, resulting in continual evolution. Business organizations are open systems and that they have to take into account all the forces and factors of the environment within which they have to function. A system has its own objectives, components or elements and a process. It has inputs, outputs and a throughput.

Human resource development cannot be a series of ad-hoc decisions and practices. It has to be based on a set of predictable practices and measures. As per Pareek and Rao, HRD system consists of the following components:

1. Career system

Employees can be developed through proper application of performance and potential appraisal, career planning and development activities. These activities should be linked to the business strategy of the organization.

2. Work planning system

Understanding of organization's mission and objectives helps employees to plan and realize their work outputs effectively in order to achieve the mission and objectives of the organization, which can then be reviewed for making appropriate improvements.

3. Development system

Competencies and skills of employees needs to be continuously developed by the organization through training, learning, coaching, etc. so that the present and future organizational requirements and challenges can be adequately met.

4. Self-renewal system

Organizations being interactive social system must ensure their adaptability to their environment through feedback and research related activities. This requires role efficacy, team building, etc. activities for employees.

5. Culture subsystem

A climate that sets norms, values and culture, and ensures a high level of motivation for employees constitutes culture-building subsystems.

Human Resource Development Strategies

Organizations need to have an objective, mission and strategy to ensure its survival, development and growth. This requires a strategically aligned fitment of people, organization and

environment. Failure to integrate human resource strategies with objectives and mission of the organization is very likely to result in failure of the organization. The term strategy refers to the art or knack of commanding and maneuvering resources to attain a decisive advantage through fruitful exploitation of opportunities provided by the environment or keeping at bay certain threats witnessed by the environment.

For the human resource development function, the increasingly competitive business environment and the consequent streamlining of organizations have created both challenges and paradoxes.

The option for human resource development strategies are:

Business Relevance	Human Resource Development effort is invested in areas of greatest value-added for the business.
Value	The organization obtains the best learning value for its development.
Synergy	Initiatives are integrated so that a learning culture can gradually be built and strengthened.

- The systematic training strategy; job analysis, training professionals and formal courses.
- Business orientation; business objectives, managerial involvement and performance review
- Continuous development and learning environments self-development; of self and by self.

Human resource development strategy is integrated because it is not a stand alone strategy-it is integrated with out broader growth and development strategies in general and to initiatives aimed at employment creation in particular-and if it is to succeed it must remain so.

HRD Strategies

Organisations today have to develop people strategies to deal effectively with globalization and competitiveness. Generally, human resource development strategies relate to attracting, engaging, retaining, developing, motivating and utilizing employees and their competencies for effective organizational functioning, growth and excellence.

Major HRD strategies are as under:

1.Communications Strategy:

Continuous communications with employees, their family members and the society at large is crucial to an organization. Given continuous changes, it is essential to educate and train employees about the need for change and seeking their commitment is critical factor in success of any change management process of an organization.

2.Accountability and ownership strategy

Employee accountability and ownership is vital to organizations intending to stay competitive. Employee’s accountability and ownership leads to higher productivity and customer excelleration. Therefore, fostering accountability and ownership through various human resource development processes and systems such as performance appraisal, career planning and development, counseling and mentoring, quality of work life, etc. which must be linked to business plans, is essential to build a strong organizational culture for building and sustaining competitive advantage.

3. Quality strategy

Quality is the foundation of any organization. Quality is a mind set, which needs to be fostered in the employees through training and development. Quality should be promoted in everything an organization does, through various quality management tools such as total quality management. Total Quality Management places emphasis on Quality that encompasses the entire organization and involves:

- Continuous Improvement
- Employee empowerment, quality circles
- Benchmarking-best at similar activities, even if in different industries
- Just In Time-requires quality of suppliers
- TQM Tools-allow you to measure progress

4. Cost reduction strategy

Cost reduction strategy plays a significant role in the organizations. Employees need to see 'waste' everywhere. Every employee's contribution in savings is crucial as small contributions from each employee can be pooled by organizations to save substantial savings at the end of a given period and enhance its competitive strategy.

5. Intrapreneurship Strategy

Every employee needs to be an intrapreneur i.e. independent entrepreneur who can generate ideas and bring them to reality by using the existing resources and support of the organization to create innovative and creative products and services. This requires developing assertive risk taking in the employees. Organisations must enable their human resource development processes and systems to foster such an environment for its employees.

6. Culture building strategy

Organisations valuing its employees have a sustainable competitive edge over competitors because employees are highly charged, motivated and commitment to the organisation. A strong culture fosters higher employee commitment towards the goals and objectives of the organization.

7. Systematic training strategy

Systematic training based on job analysis, organizational mission and objectives leads to improved return on investment. The planning and organization of formal on-job training and off-job training leads to improving vital employee characteristics, build and sustain appropriate work culture and brings in more professionalism in action.

8. Learning strategy

Continuous development and learning environments promote self development of employees; of self and by self. It aim to achieve a 'learning organization' necessary to equip employees with new skills and competencies on ongoing basis. It requires HRD processes and systems to focus on:

- Coaching and mentoring culture
- Self-directed systems
- Learner led

Economic liberalization and globalization have put pressures on Indian industry, to offer high quality products and services, backed by customer excelleration.

Designing Human Resource Development Strategy

The steps of designing human resource development strategy involve:

1. Getting the 'big picture'

Understanding of business strategy is necessary to highlight the key driving forces of the business such as technology, distribution, competition and the markets. Assessment of the implications of the driving forces for the people side of business is vital so as to identify the fundamental people contribution to bottom line business performance.

2. Developing a mission statement or statement of intent

It is crucial to develop a mission statement or statement of intent that relates to the people side of the business. The words or references should not be idealistic statements-it is the actual process of thinking through the issues in a formal and explicit manner that is important.

3. Conducting a SWOT analysis of the organization

Focus should be placed on the internal strengths and weaknesses of the people side of the business such as the current skill and capability issues. Organisations must vigorously research the external business and market environment in order to highlight the opportunities and threats relating to the people side of the business

From this analysis, review of the capability of human resource development function needs to be made. A complete SWOT analysis of the function embodying its current areas of operation, the service levels and competences of human resource development staff can be made.

4. Conducting a detailed human resource analysis

It entails concentrating on the organisation's culture, organization structure, people and COPS(culture, organization, people and systems) then gap analysis can be undertaken by examining present status and desired status

5. Determining critical people issues

The business strategy is reviewed and examined against SWOT and COPS analysis to identify the critical people issues namely those people issues must be addressed so as to have a key impact on the delivery of business strategy. Then prioritization of the critical people issues is to be shaped up keeping in view efforts and available resources.

6. Developing consequences and solutions

For each critical issue the options for managerial action generated needs to be highlighted, elaborated and created. This is an important step as frequently people jump for the known rather than challenge existing assumptions about the way things have been done in the past. Various courses of action need to be evaluated carefully. Consideration of the mix of human resource development systems needed to address the issues such as ways to improve communications, training and career development and the implications for the business and the human resource development function is important.

Future Challenges to Human Resource Development Strategy

Resources may be wasted by neglect, depleted by consumption, destroyed by misuse or enhanced by developmental intervention. The human being is indeed the resource of all resources. No one, therefore, would ever think of wasting, depleting or destroying this prime resource. And yet, humans do face such a predicament. This predicament, it is argued, is primarily because of the absence of an appropriate ideology or set of values in those who are the in-charge
The challenges could be viewed in the broader perspective of the ever-evolving HR knowledge corpus, rather than from a narrow, technical and operationalised human resource development practice. The 21st century challenges are as follows:

1. The Philosophical challenge

The need is to have a holistic understanding of human resource development as a hallmark of organisational excellence. Organisational excellence refers to excellence in whatever endeavor

an organization undertakes to achieve organizational objectives. There is a great need to understand that business success emanates from people-who are fully developed, committed, motivated and satisfied and who can do value creation and value addition to the organization, simply because employees are not just an organisation's greatest asset but they are the greatest asset of customers of the organization. Organisations must have a free, just and fair culture and practices to respect diversity, divergence and risk taking capabilities.

2.The values challenge

The issue is between nature and nurture. Nature is a matter of potentialities, talents and gifts and nurture is a matter of trainability or educability. It is possible that 60% of the support staff in an organization could not have a university degree because there were no opportunities given to them and due to the elitist policy for higher education. However, now society is moving towards the democratization of education. Therefore value is core to human resource development. For instance, values of ageism. After people have retired, there is no more use of them. In some society, they pay for the education of retired people and for the overall development of old people

3.The challenge of appropriate HRD strategy

Organisations have to devise appropriate human resource development strategy in conjunction with its business strategy, which leverages individual goals and aspirations with that of the organization resulting in maximization of business impact for corporate success. Senior leadership must understand people side of the business and imbibe it with business of the organization treating people as a strategic resource of the organization with limitless potential

4.The challenge of policy

Human resource development policies must be comprehensive and integrated so that key elements are included resulting in maximum development of employees so that they are able to create an agile and responsive sets of competencies for maximizing both individual wants and needs and that of goals and objectives of their organizations

5.The challenge of prime movers(Champions)

All the systems and sub-systems of an organization should interactive and communicative with each other so that human resource development becomes an integrated organizational approach and a way of doing great business.

Conclusion

HRD must be closely linked with the Human Resource Management (HRM) and performance management processes of the organization to ensure that people have the appropriate competencies to contribute to achieving organization's goals and those effective strategies are in place to enhance individual and team performance.