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### **What Competencies Make for an Effective HR Practitioner?**

### **Introduction**

My employer is Gill Davies Productions Limited (GDP) – a UK leader in the sale and distribution of recreational juggling balls. My role as HR Assistant gives me the opportunity to work at the heart of the business, and implement best practice to support our customers. My long-term goal is to observe and learn how my business operates, acquire the skills to take on additional responsibilities and transfigure my business ideas into reality.

### **1 Part One**

**1.1 My HR Profession Map Summary**

I view the CIPD HR Profession Map as a compass to track progress in your HR career. The Map details ten workplace disciplines and eight effective behaviours to perform a HR function. It is used to identify and address competency shortfalls, whilst bolstering existing workplace strengths.

**1.1.1 Strategy, Insights & Solutions**

The Profession Map’s central narrative informs and focuses every outer area of expertise. ‘Strategy, insights and solutions’ sequences a process that reliably accesses how well you understand your organisation in terms of mandate, scope and proposition. This information can then be used to redress prevailing organisational problems, identify mission critical needs and anticipate future opportunities.

**1.1.2 Leading & Managing The HR Function**

The Map’s second layer characterises proactivity in the workplace. As a HR practitioner you are expected to perform your duties as a role model leader, periodically evaluate ways to maximise your contribution and issue developmental support to your colleagues. Being receptive to the workplace and the positive influence your function proffers, improves organisational efficiency and paves the way for continued growth.

**1.1.3 The Eight Behaviours**

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| **Behaviour** | **Is about** | **Is not about** |
| **Curious** | Forward thinking and receptive potential disruptions to improve your organisation processes | Implementing untested changes without consideration of longevity or appropriateness |
| **Decisive Thinker** | Taking defensible, calculated and informed action based on peer-review information and data | Brazen, authoritative impulsivity that overlooks other options on the table without accountability |
| **Skilled Influencer** | Effective communication that inspires and commits business actions from decision makers | Ignoring the views and motives of others before decisions are taken by assuming commitment |
| **Personally Credible** | Projecting and delivering reliable expertise and valuable commercial sense to a company | Disregarding personal brand and reputation through empty promises and commitments |
| **Collaborative** | Professionally working with internal and external stakeholders by cooperation and inclusiveness | Being discourteous and unable to recognise scenarios that would profit from other involvement |
| **Driven to Deliver** | Determination and motive to honour a commitment irrespective of the obstacles | Behaving blasé with deadlines, output and directionless with how best to support an organisation |
| **Courage to Challenge** | To not remain silent with colleagues when preventable inefficiencies are identified | Perpetuate mistakes by proxy of passive acceptance or fear of being discredited or derided |
| **Role Model** | Carrying out duties with impartiality and integrity by balancing in/formal stipulations | Partiality, and ignoring careful the careful navigation of social, legal and business related matters |

**1.3 Professional Area: Service Delivery and Information**

I have chosen ‘Service Delivery and Information’ at Band One because providing cost-effective project management, illuminating areas of improvement with data and offering support throughout employee tenure is the foundation of good customer service.

Some of the activities, knowledge, and behaviours most relevant to my role include the following:

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| **HRPM Element** | **Relevant to me because** |
| **Activities** | |
| **Process Support** | Whether I data manage, process delivery or offer useful information, being flexible allows me to support the business where it is most needed |
| **Delivering Fundamentals** | Accomplishing my mandate as a HR practitioner ensures I am fulfilling my brief and professionally dependable to complete given tasks |
| **Facts and Information** | Broad awareness of my organisation allows me to navigate internal infrastructure, stakeholders and perform with up-to-date information |
| **Knowledge** | |
| **Performance and Reward** | Rewarding merit reinforces valued organisation behaviours and encourages other employees to improve or maintain performance output |
| **Learning and Development** | In supporting a learning culture for my organisation, it equips our employees with needed skills and anticipates future ones in demand |
| **Resourcing and Talent Planning** | Organising fair assessment centres and interviews is important for candidate selection and talent planning because each role has expected criteria |
| **Behaviours** | |
| **Driven to Deliver** | Motivation to meet or exceed expectations adds value to my organisation and ensures realistic appraisals are considered for organisational goals |
| **Collaborative** | Building and maintaining interpersonal working relationships with customers is vital to my day-to-day function and nurtures colleague cooperation |
| **Personally Credible** | Cultivating brand recognition and a personal reputation for competency and reliability establishes trust with new or current opportunities |

### **2 Part Two**

HR practitioners should ensure the services they provide are timely and effective. I will now outline three key areas namely: understanding customer needs, communicating effectively and building and maintaining effective service.

**2.1 Understanding Customer Needs**

Anyone who uses an HR-related service would be considered an HR customer. Within an organisation, this would include senior managers, line managers, and employees. By virtue of HR’s involvement in matters relating to job design, workforce planning, recruitment, training, remuneration and legal disputations – each function will be relevant to different job roles under different circumstances.

It is vital to prioritise customers’ expectations to know where your time and energy is best concentrated. One effective solution to consider using is ‘Eisenhower’s Urgent/Important’ metric. Deescalating in priority, tasks would be arranged according to whether they fit the following definitions:

* **Important and urgent**
* **Important but not urgent**
* **Not important but urgent**
* **Not important and not urgent**

Occasionally a situation may arise where a customer’s needs overlap with those of another’s. Here are three scenarios where this could happen:

* A senior manager informs you staff working hours need to increase and part-time vacancies will be cut back. This would conflict with existing employee contracts and lead to a dispute. Eisenhower’s metric may define this as ‘important but not urgent’ – because the process would be long, consultative and with exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
* Several line managers express concern over the training employees receive after recruitment. Declining productivity and attrition is a known problem. One approach would be to identify struggling employees and put them through a refresher training session. Next, a reshaping of recruitment process would be necessary to improve the selection of job role compatible candidates. These measures would cost time, resourcing and money, which may conflict with senior management budgets. Something endemic as this only worsens by inaction, therefore, Eisenhower’s metric may define this as ‘important and urgent’.
* At short notice, an employee requests annual leave to attend a non-specified event. You learn it is to attend a gig. This was not disclosed at the recruitment stage and no attempt was made to authorise with their line manager. This would conflict with the line manager’s interest when the employee is needed and no replacement is available. Eisenhower’s metric could call this ‘not important and not urgent’. The employee may be displeased with the outcome, but giving advanced notice for leave prevents loss of productivity and undue workloads to remaining staff.

**2.2 Communicating Effectively**

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| **Method** | **Advantage** | **Disadvantage** |
| **Webinars** | Modern method of sharing information live by web page or app irrespective of location | Quality of stream will largely depend on the user’s broadband speed and available hardware |
| **Emails** | Ubiquitous form of communication, allowing attachments and quick response | Spam filters and emails en masse risk a prioritised message receiving late reply or none at all |
| **Face-2-Face** | Able to read emotions and body language of the responder more effectively and learn more | Sometimes meeting in person is not possible due to travel issues or schedule clashes |

**2.3 Building & Maintaining Effective Service**

Every successful organisation needs to evolve with emerging industry changes to stay current. But the only way to know how the start-to-finish service is experienced by customers is to be receptive to feedback.

One way to minimise the risk of disappointment is to cultivate and nurture relationships with HR service users. Being open to formal and informal comments can reveal potential improvements or areas to clarify. Company-level surveys, regular discussions with staff and being visible around the workplace makes HR more approachable. Additionally, this would allow you to demonstrate and communicate what is and is not possible.

Typically, a difficult customer will arise when service expectations are foiled. This could be the result of a breakdown in HR communication or customer assumption. It remains a priority to make it clear why some requests can be completed in full, others compromised and, or, refused. Transparency in budgetary limitations, time and available personnel would improve understanding, and shape future requests.

A means to improve standards and mitigate complaints comes with experience and ownership of your professional development. Here are some examples of how to follow through:

* Adapting to changing customer needs to ensure your contributions are relevant and effective
* Sharing good feedback with colleagues to encourage competent behaviours
* Being conscious to changes within the wider practice and how it impacts existing organisational policy

## References

**Online Resources**

* DEP e-lesson 1, 2, 3 – <http://goo.gl/mLWW1R>
* Profession Map – <http://goo.gl/BGBQza>
* My CPD Map – <http://goo.gl/P5C30T>
* Eisenhower’s Urgent/Important Principle – <https://goo.gl/h5LjFr>

**Other**

* DEP Assessment Template
* DEP Assessment Brief