10 Pains Wreaking Havoc on Your HR Department

Only in the last decade or so have companies truly understood the value of Human Resources.

For a while it felt like HR departments were siloed—seen as corporate watchdogs that should be kept separate from other business functions. Today, though, more companies know that human capital is their greatest asset and HR is the connecting, cultivating bridge.

This renewed focus has brought a range of HR apps to the market. These tools are designed to increase efficiency by cutting back on administrative tasks—and less paperwork leaves HR professionals with more time to concentrate on value-added functions... *in theory.* But still, pains persist.

So we asked HR professionals: What are the major pain points you face today? Rate them for us on a scale of 1-10—with 1 being a minor annoyance and 10 being a low-down, scarring hurt. The answers we got were candid and telling: some responses were harsh and specific, while others were optimistic and broad. (But that's the thing about pain points, right? You might not realize how painful they are.)

So read on as we discuss 10 pains wreaking havoc on your HR department. We'll cover the hows and whys, and even offer solutions to fix them.

① Manual processes and spreadsheets

Using a spreadsheet for HR processes is like using a fork for soup: You *can* do it, but why? Manual data entry is a waste of time. And guess what? A pile of spreadsheets does not equal a report, especially now that there are slick cloud services that can automate so many of your HR tasks. Using spreadsheets means you're not taking advantage of a set of business processes; you're making up rules as you go, which isn't a sustainable business practice. Plus, there's no single version of the truth when you're working with spreadsheets—your data is (literally!) all over the place. Spreadsheets don't integrate well with systems for payroll, 401k, or recruiting, and when you're trying to do actual analysis, it's darn near impossible to use Excel. Make life easier for yourself; unify these processes and tasks with the proven efficiencies of Human Capital Management (HCM) software.
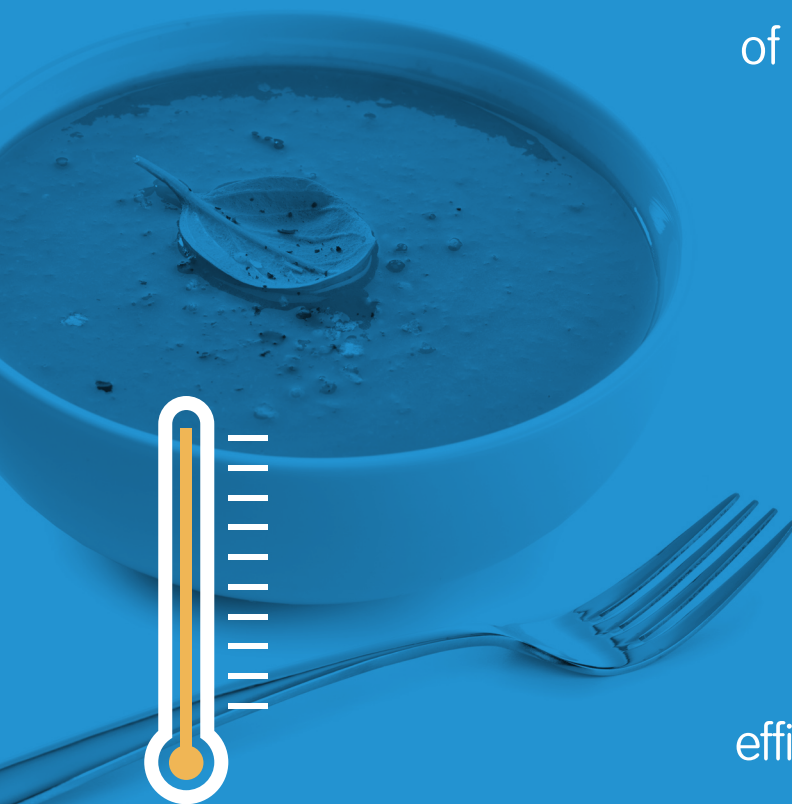
Pain factor: 10+

2 Disparate systems damage

If system integration sounds like a hassle, imagine the flip side. You've got one system for recruiting, another for talent management, a third for master data management. You've got to train your team on the different systems, you have to enter information multiple times to maintain consistency, and you've got higher costs. The small annoyance here is that you have to log out of one system and log into the next. The real pain comes when you realize how little visibility you have in the end—*and* that you have to do all that manual stuff anyway. Your numbers, tracking, and analytics are off, and everything takes longer. Stop the pain! A good HCM system keeps you organized and effective; invest in one early. With one point of entry, your information is consistent and accurate. Plus, it's more efficient and helps with compliance.

Pain factor: 10

3 | Lack of workforce visibility and metrics

Human resources isn't often considered a data center, but in today's world—where everything is tracked and analyzed—visibility is key. Analytics are no longer a nice-to-have; they're a *have-to-have*. You probably already know this thanks to the questions you get on a daily basis. How many people did we hire last month? How many employees were terminated vs. left on their own? What's our headcount for sales? And on, and on, and on. The solution here is simple: An integrated HCM system can give you real-time metrics on headcount, turnover, new hires, and more. Go ahead—Track your hiring against plans for the year, drill down into the data, and populate your org charts—all in seconds. And the next time someone asks for churn stats and time-to-hire? You'll be ready with the answers.

Pain factor: 9
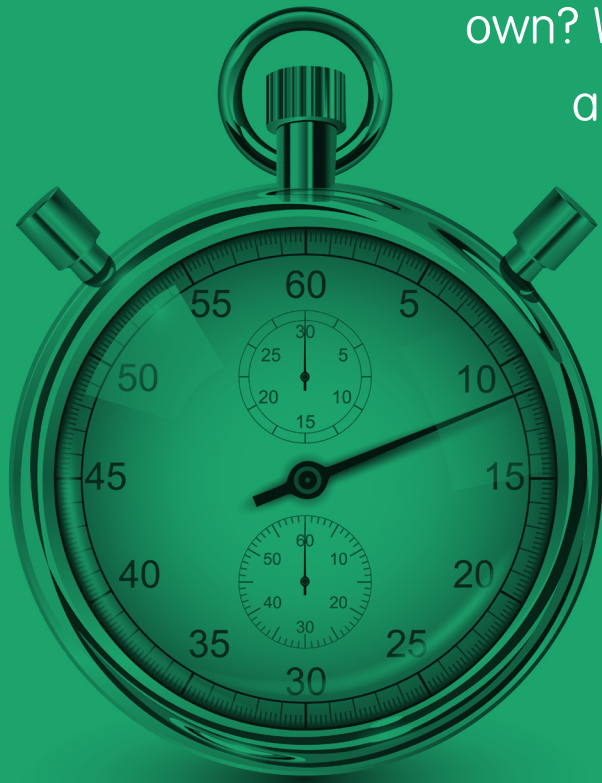
4 The chaos of recruiting

Recruiting is a necessary evil for HR folks. Sure, there's a certain satisfaction to finding the right person for a job, but recruiting can also devolve into a drawn-out process of finding the candidates, scheduling interviews, evaluating personalities, and getting them processed—only to get one-upped by another company in the end. Even when all goes well, there's the onboarding process, another pain in itself. HR professionals have found great success via active recruiting sites like LinkedIn. Even social tools like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have played an important role in passive recruiting, or targeting candidates who aren't necessarily looking for work. Maintain your efficiency—and your sanity—by using an HCM system to stay organized. From applicant tracking and job search functionality to interview scheduling and email integration, HCM takes the pain out of recruiting.
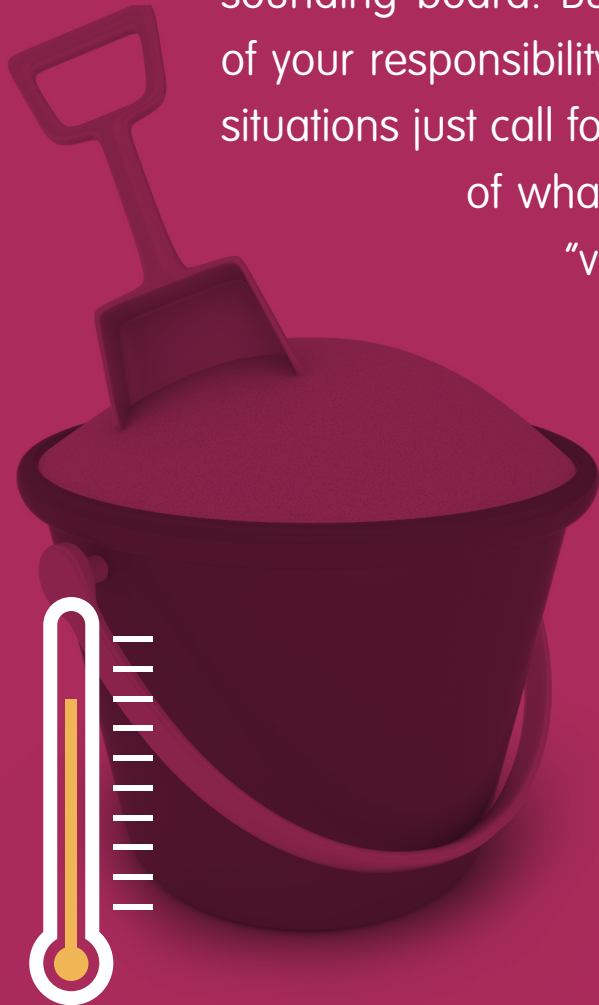
Pain factor: 9

5 Employee relations nightmares

Ahhhh, employee relations… The classic HR function that leaves you playing peacemaker in the sandbox. People just love to complain, and you get to be their corporate sounding board. But guess what: That's not going to change—*nor should it.* Part of your responsibility as an HR professional is to ensure office harmony, and some situations just call for a humanistic approach. However, you also need to be mindful of what executives want, which is to streamline the tasks that prevent "value-added" work and data analytics. So how do you reconcile the two: ensuring your employees feel valued and heard, while also engaging in more analytical work? At its core, employee relations is a risk management function. An HCM system can help you manage this risk by identifying patterns and trends. It'll quickly highlight repeat offenders, common situations, and red flags. This, along with things like workforce conduct policies and sensitivity training, help you build a solid risk management plan. So you can still be receptive to the needs of your employees, while also applying the same level of rigor to your strategic human capital management decisions.

Pain factor: 8

6 Employee churn

There's no getting around it: Turnover is a tremendous pain in the rear. Attrition is a huge cost to companies in terms of loss of employees, loss of productivity, additional time to recruit, and time to train. Depending on the specialization of the open role, this can get pricey. It's no secret that a company's employees are an appreciating asset: the longer they stay with an organization, the more value they add. Tenured employees know the systems, the products, and how to work as a team. So how do you keep them? The basic premise of Human Capital Management is that cultivating your workforce is the most powerful thing an organization can do. You simply can't produce superior business results unless you're retaining your talent. Rely on a proven, integrated HCM system to strengthen your workforce and keep your top talent. How? HCM can help you set and track employee performance goals, foster career paths, and provide a more collaborative work environment.

Pain factor: 8

7 Poor employee engagement

Engagement has become a key metric for HR. Why? Because the evolution of an employee relies on his or her commitment to the company. Think about it: if employees are engaged and content, there's a much greater chance they'll stick around. Higher retention overflows with downstream effects such as increased productivity, tremendous time savings in recruiting, and even lower costs via reduced onboarding. Engagement metrics are also central for staffing, incentive plans, and benefits. Bottom line? If they're happy, they produce. It's not your job as an HR professional to keep employees engaged—yet high engagement makes your job much, *much* easier. (It's symbiotic!) So how do you get there? Proper HCM can help. Try using surveys, evaluations, and regular feedback—and never neglect the telling material you get from a good exit interview.

zzz

Pain factor: 6

8 Forced social collaboration

The rise of mobile and social software means more and more professionals are choosing to work from home—and IT isn't the only department that feels that pain. As companies rush to create flexible workplace environments, giving fulltime employees the ability to work where, when, and how they want, how do you keep employees engaged and happy? And how do you also ensure a physical presence in the office? The answer isn't difficult: HR, too, must modify its practices to leverage social collaboration. This goes beyond storing and sharing various HR documents with employees. Modern HR departments are utilizing social collaboration tools to recruit top talent, facilitate mentoring, and accelerate the returns on their hiring investments. Social software has become a central force at any company, and HR must do more than pay it lip service when recruiting new talent. They need to be a leader—an advocate, an evangelist—in social collaboration. A great feedback process and system is key.
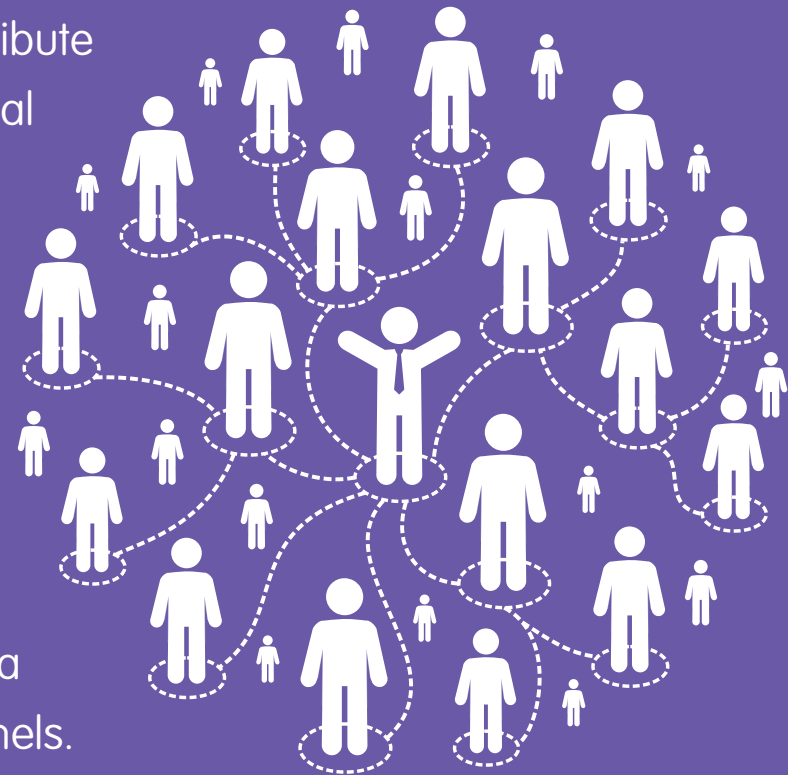
Pain factor: 5

9 Social media snafus

Social media isn't often cited as a pain. In fact, it usually helps HR professionals significantly more than it hurts. Social media platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter are more important to candidates in the job search than ever before. And after initially viewed by some employers as a potential threat to their reputations or as a distraction for employees, most workplaces now embrace social media. Social tools aid collaboration in an organization and help employees give and receive immediate feedback—all of which contribute to productivity, retention, and job satisfaction. Social tools often offer the truest indicator of performance, and social media has become instrumental for recruiting. But it's the fire drills that cause problems: when employees take to social media to vent about the company or their colleagues. Of course they're allowed the freedom of speech, but it's your job to maintain sanity in the workplace. Be sure to publish your company's official social media policy—and post it to all of your internal social channels.

Pain factor: 4

10 Mobility growing pains

Today's anytime-anywhere mobile access is changing the game for HR. How? Mobile applications for learning, recruiting, collaboration, talent management, and more have created countless efficiencies and boosted the impact an HR team can have. They enable HR to run their workforces from a device…in theory. But that's not always the case, as many HR departments haven't fully adapted to the digital world themselves, despite the myriad apps and solutions available. That's why many HR departments still have trouble finding an effective way to engage mobile candidates: *They can't relate*. Plus, it seems like no two mobile candidates are alike, so even when a recruiter finds the right way to engage one, the method doesn't work for a different candidate. Yes, mobility has unquestionably given HR the potential for greatness, but it's also created a few new growing pains along the way. To help address these pains, look for an HCM solution that can improve your employee experience with solutions built for today's workforce: one that uses social networks and mobile applications to target active and passive candidates, plus engage existing employees.

Pain factor: 4

How to heal the pain

HR professionals are tasked with ensuring a pleasant and productive work environment, yet in the struggle to improve the experience for everyone else, their own job satisfaction is often overlooked. The frustrations and inefficiencies are clear, and they affect your workforce, your customers, and your bottom line. Fortunately, today's leading companies are stepping up by choosing a cloud-based HCM system that integrates seamlessly with front- and back-end systems. These systems solve just about every pain on the spectrum and lay important groundwork for retention and growth.

So what are you waiting for? Take the first step toward HR glory.
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