



POST-PANDEMIC CHANGES AND CHALLENGES: SUGGESTIONS FOR HR PRACTICES

AN OFFICIAL CLIENT UPDATE OF PT HEADHUNTER INDONESIA



Looking back at 2020, the pandemic was a difficult situation for everyone, not only in Indonesia but also around the world. Companies were suffering, except some in the healthcare and logistics industries. Cost cutting, which included layoffs, were necessary. This left company owners in a great predicament – if they could handle this, they could survive anything.

The post-covid recovery started well. Indonesia had pulled itself out of a 2020 recession by the first quarter of 2021. However, due to the conflict in Ukraine and then several climate-related disasters around the world, inflation began to rise sharply and is expected to reach 3.6%, which is the worst it has been in years. Also, several major Indonesian startup companies, such as LinkAja and Zenius, had to lay off approximately 25% of their employees.

With the worsening economic situation, human resources departments need a plan to adapt and reorganize.

This dynamic brought on by the pandemic has had its ups and down. Will this fluctuation continue for some time? Will there be more layoffs and cost cutting? Will this affect the whole talent market as well as management, too? Is there anything human resources departments can do to better adapt to these changes?

The role of HR

Traditionally, the role of HR departments in many organizations has been more closely aligned with personnel and administrative functions that were seen by the organizations as mere paperwork. However, nowadays the role of HR has evolved. HR has become a strategic partner with the leaders of business and has contributed to significant business decisions and given advice on critical transitions. HR is there to formulate policy and handle people's issues.

During the pandemic, HR expertise and capabilities had been put to test. With so many uncertainties going on, they had to provide strategies on how

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to take better care of the employees. Unfortunately, during that time, cost-cutting and layoffs were commonplace. There were, of course, those in HR who tried their best to not lay anyone off, and with the help of management, many were successful in keeping their whole organization in one piece.

At the same time, people also started to see things differently. They became more aware of their wellness, both physically and mentally. This led to big changes across professions. The pandemic has not only changed the way of life but also the way of work and defined what is professional. It is important for HR professionals to be aware of these changes since talent management will never be the same again after this.

Working from Home VS Working from the Office

The transition to people working from home (WFH) was one of the most unprecedented changes we've ever seen in the workplace. In Jakarta, where traffic is miserable, WFH was a welcomed choice since it allowed people to avoid congested rush hour traffic, and it helped them save on transportation costs. Post-pandemic, this trend continues, and the data shows that many employees and job candidates are open to jobs that can provide a hybrid system or even ones that offer 100% WFH.

To cope with this, HR experts should be able to strategize and formulate a form of work which best suits their employees, the company, and the culture. Of course, WFH won't affect manufacturing, factories, or other labor-intensive industries.

Digital Awareness

To support safety when employees work at home, it is also important for companies to utilize the available technology to its maximum capacity. The use of AI, online meeting platforms, attendance applications, etc. have been used to assist with telework and communication over the last two years. However, enterprises must invest more in ensuring that their employees are skilled in these types of programs, are able to better problem solve when they encounter technical issues, and are afforded opportunities to continuously update their learning. This should apply not only to new talent but also current employees.

Speaking of recruitment, since meetings and interviews have been held virtually over the last two years, there has been a change of trend where people who were traditionally not comfortable with online interviews are now more accustomed to them, making them the new norm. Post-pandemic, this trend has made it easier to hold interviews online and can help hasten the recruitment process.

Organization Culture and Reskilling

The changes brought on by work-from-home, hybrid-working, and virtual-meeting software has made it a necessity for companies to keep up with technological changes. Although social distancing measures have largely come to an end, some might still continue.

Companies should do more to promote continuous learning to encourage employees to gain new skills, both hard skills and soft skills, which will help them better deal with future, yet-unknown situations that might appear sooner rather than later.

Dealing with the pandemic has been quite a challenge for current talent; it has been even harder for new talent. Hiring new talent during the pandemic was usually done online. If this continues post-pandemic, the employees who work closely with the new talent should strengthen their communication and soft skills to welcome them appropriately.

HR should also provide an effective onboarding system which utilizes not only technically-wise but also culturally-wise systems, meaning that HR should not only provide technical trainings but also provide a place and time for new talent to get to know their peers better. By doing this, new talent will feel that they are in a secure place and will hopefully be able to perform better.

Candidate-Driven Markets

The pandemic has widened the gap between educated and entry-level job requirements. An estimated 1.3 billion people worldwide have been affected by such skill mismatches. In the meantime, only highly qualified candidates have been able to compete in the market, and they are being headhunted by many companies at the same time. HR experts should understand that this candidate-driven market situation puts HR in an unfavorable situation. HR experts should not assume that all the candidates in their lists are actively looking for a job. They are not. To streamline this process, HR should provide a recruitment process which is faster, more thoughtful, and fairer so that it attracts better candidates into the company.

Conclusion

As the pandemic continues to change many aspects of our lives as well as people's perspectives on their jobs and careers, HR experts should try to better read and understand how the talent market and management systems have been changing. An ability to do this will help HR experts execute their jobs easier, achieve their companies' targets better, and provide safer workplaces for all levels of employees.

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