

5 Superpowers of a Great HR Manager



Most of us have encountered HR managers who seemed neither human nor resourceful. Luckily, many of us have also encountered HR managers who helped us through tough situations and made us feel seen. What makes a great HR manager? Here's a look at five superpowers the very best HR managers have.

ETHICS

The toughest ethical dilemmas include many gray areas. An **ETHICAL** leader can get past complexities and details to identify the basic moral principles at play, weigh them, and help an organization come to the best possible decision. HR managers deal with many ethical issues, from pay equity to discrimination, harassment, bullying in the workplace and more. Great HR managers demonstrate over time that a moral compass guides their decisions, they understand the organization's mission, and they will lead with curiosity and hear and weigh all sides of an issue. While employees may not always agree with a great HR manager's decision, over time they learn to trust that they will be treated fairly.

EMPATHY

In the course of an HR manager's work, employees might disclose miscarriages, substance abuse, mental health struggles, and many more deeply personal matters. Because of the sensitive nature of HR work and its reliance on trust, great HR managers must be **EMPATHETIC**. They must be able to show understanding and concern for the emotional experiences of others. An empathetic HR manager will inspire trust and confidence in their staff, and help draw out important issues and concerns that a less empathetic individual could not surface.

PROBLEM SOLVING

When a matter reaches the HR manager, it often involves conflict or risk. Great HR managers help their colleagues **SOLVE PROBLEMS**. They can identify the key issues that arise in conflict, find the causes of those issues, and work with the people involved to brainstorm solutions and find an approach that works for the situation. They know when it's time to take a break from a tough conversation, and when a few more minutes of intense discussion could yield a breakthrough. They have the tools to untangle difficult situations and how to deploy those tools.

ORGANIZATION

The HR manager plays a key role in many of a nonprofit's most important decisions, like hiring and firing. A lot rides on their work, and their ability to back up a decision when challenged, such as in an employment lawsuit. HR managers juggle many time-sensitive issues and projects, both immediate and long-term. For all these reasons, great HR managers must be **ORGANIZED**. Organization also helps ensure that HR managers always do what they say they'll do, a key ingredient in building trust with their teams.

COMMUNICATION

When the first word in your job title is "human," you have to **COMMUNICATE** well with other people. HR managers must be clear and direct in their communications. If an employee has behaved in an unacceptable manner, the HR manager must convey the consequences. They must answer employees' questions to the best of their ability without overstepping their authority. They also need to be able to summarize the key points in a conflict, state what they've heard clearly, and share how they will move forward.

