

The Value of SAHRA's Membership to Emerging HR Professionals

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Among young HR professionals, my experience entering the HR field and joining SAHRA is a little unique.

I landed my first position post-college as an HR/Accounting assistant with a small 49-er company. It's not uncommon for small businesses to have both HR and Accounting as one department. Barely a couple months in, the VP made a decision to split our department in two. I was tasked to be the company's main "HR person." Essentially, the HR department had to be rebuilt from the ground up. My main areas of focus were policies, orientation, safety, payroll, and compliance. This was an amazing opportunity and I was determined to make the most out of it.

I quickly realized I was a little in over my head. Apprehensive about my new role and my lack of experience, I knew I could not solely depend on the internet and SHRM as my resource. As a result, I joined SAHRA with the intention of connecting with experienced HR professionals and utilizing SAHRA as a resource to my position.

Since joining, SAHRA has provided me with learning opportunities, connections, mentorship, and growth in various aspects of my development. In my first year of working in HR, I built an HR department that provided structure to my employer and employees. SAHRA has been a valuable resource that has given me the confidence to grow in my career.

Advantages of a SAHRA Membership

#1. Mentorship

Having a mentor in any field will help your career grow and thrive. From HR Insights to SAHRA's mentorship program, I've had the opportunity to hear from numerous HR leaders in the Sacramento area. The advice I received and the things I learned have been invaluable to my professional development.

My mentor has been my soundboard. She has been there to provide me with feedback and support for any challenges and ideas I had. I rewrote our company's employee handbook to reflect current employment compliance. My mentor reviewed some of the policies and helped me

prepare a case to my leadership team on the necessity of mandating meal and rest break compliance for nonexempt employees. In addition to providing tips to managing the change, she gave me advice on HR best practices to reduce business liability. On a personal level, she's been a person I could go to if I had questions about the skills I needed to develop to prepare me for the next steps in my career. To this day, we are continually learning and sharing information and resources with one another.

#2. Education

Continuous learning is critical to the future success of any HR professional. HR is constantly changing; we have to learn to think more strategically and adapt to new HR policies, challenges, trends, and innovation. As a SAHRA member, you have a competitive edge with all the educational resources available to you; e.g. seminars, webinars, certification study groups, workshops, law-updates, and the annual conference. Learning from expert professionals continues to motivate me to step-up my HR game.

#3. Connections, connections, connections

SAHRA's annual conference and membership mixers are an incredible opportunity for you to meet and network with your fellow HR peers and industry leaders. Building a network outside your place of employment inspires new ways of thinking and increases your chances of learning something new. Who knows? That inspiration could lead to an awesome new idea or project.

At the end of my first year with my former company, I took a step back and knew that in order for me to develop myself as an HR professional, I needed to build a more structured foundation. It was through my connections at SAHRA that helped me take that next step.

To my fellow emerging professionals, we are the future of HR, and it is up to us to be proactive with our career development. I strongly encourage you to get involved with SAHRA, to build your network, and to take advantage of the resources that are out there.