

8 Human Resources Resolutions for 2019

By HR Solutions Blog Team, ADP

New Year's resolutions can help bring about positive change, whether in our personal lives or at work. With 2019 approaching, here are some HR resolutions to consider—and suggestions for helping make them stick.

#1: Review your hiring procedures.

Review your job advertisements, recruiting practices, application forms, interview questions, and screening and selection procedures to ensure they are effective and comply with all applicable laws. Avoid questions that could reveal a candidate's protected class, such as age, disability, national origin, and religion. Additionally, depending on your jurisdiction, you may be prohibited from asking about an applicant's criminal history (prior to making a conditional job offer) or salary history.

#2: Create/update job descriptions.

Written job descriptions can help you identify essential functions and qualifications needed for a role. They can also help you set clear expectations with employees, evaluate performance, make compensation decisions, identify training needs, handle requests for reasonable accommodations, and make exempt vs. non-exempt classification decisions. In 2019, review and update your job descriptions to make sure they accurately reflect the current requirements of each position within your company.

#3: Review worker classifications.

Exempt Employees:

Review the status of employees who are classified as exempt from overtime, since these employees must meet very specific salary and duties tests. Some jurisdictions tie exempt salary requirements to the minimum wage, which means the minimum salary required to be exempt under state law changes whenever the state's minimum wage does. For example, both Alaska and California require employers to pay exempt employees a salary of at least twice the minimum wage and both states are increasing their minimum wage on January 1.

Independent Contractors:

For workers to be considered bona fide independent contractors, very specific federal and state tests must be satisfied. Generally, the more control the business has over the worker, the more likely he or she will be considered an employee of the company. If you plan to use independent contractors in 2019, make sure you meet the necessary tests. Consider conducting these tests regularly since your company's relationship with the worker may change over time.

#4: Create/update your handbook.

If you haven't already done so, create or update your employee handbook for 2019. A handbook can help you communicate important workplace information to employees and demonstrate compliance with various employment laws. It's a best practice to review your handbook at least annually to ensure it is up to date with current laws and company procedures. With many new laws taking effect in early 2019, now is the time for this review

#5: Evaluate performance management.

Clearly communicate performance goals to all employees, deliver regular feedback, and provide employees with the support and resources they need to meet their objectives. If you already have a performance management program in place, assess whether it effectively rewards top performers, clearly communicates goals to all employees, and evaluates employees' performance at least annually. It's also important to identify the skills and knowledge your employees need to succeed now and in the future. Develop a training plan and consider development opportunities for your employees.

#6: Evaluate anti-harassment efforts.

In some jurisdictions, anti-harassment training is required. Absent a specific requirement, it's a best practice to train all employees on sexual and other forms of harassment, from your top executives down to entry-level employees. In light of the many sexual harassment scandals in 2017, employers are re-evaluating their training programs. Many are including a focus on bystander intervention to train employees to spot unwelcome and offensive behavior and to step in and take action when they see it. Additionally, make sure your policies and practices effectively address harassment. Provide practical examples of harassment, give employees multiple avenues to file complaints, take all complaints seriously, emphasize the company will not retaliate, and launch a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation when you receive a complaint.

#7: Elicit more employee feedback.

To help retain a committed and engaged workforce, consider eliciting feedback from your employees regularly to gain insight into their experience working for you. You can increase the quality and quantity of responses by making it easy for employees to participate (such as an online system), stressing how important it is for you to receive feedback, and making sure you follow up on all suggestions from employees. Additionally, if an employee gives notice that they are leaving your company, conduct an exit interview. Exit interviews can help you identify your company's strengths and weaknesses and transfer knowledge to a successor or replacement. To encourage candor among departing employees, let them know that their honest feedback is necessary for making workplace improvements and that while exit-interview reports will be provided to management, the reports are anonymous.

#8: Promote your employer brand.

The way employees, former employees, and potential employees perceive your company can be critical to attracting, engaging, and retaining top talent and potential clients. If you haven't developed an employer brand, think what makes your company a great place to work and regularly promote that message internally and externally.

Conclusion:

Establish a few key business goals for 2019 and develop a plan for accomplishing them.