

IB Business Management - Topic 2.1 Introduction to Human Resource Management

Worksheet 1 (Version A)

Focus: HRM vs personnel management; roles of HRM; HRM automation and workforce planning

Suggested time	60 minutes
Total marks	50
Instructions	Answer all questions. For multiple choice, select the best answer (A-D). For written responses, show clear business reasoning and use terminology accurately.

Command terms reminder: define (give the meaning), explain (give reasons or causes), analyse (break down with cause-effect), discuss/evaluate (consider different viewpoints and reach a justified conclusion).

Section A: Multiple choice

Choose the best answer for each question. **[10 marks]**

- 1. Which option best defines human resource management (HRM)? [1]**
 - A. Paying wages and salaries so employees remain satisfied
 - B. Hiring employees only when a vacancy occurs
 - C. Acquiring, developing, motivating and rewarding people to help achieve organisational objectives
 - D. Managing recruitment, training and pay as separate, unrelated tasks
- 2. A key difference between personnel management and HRM is that HRM: [1]**
 - A. focuses only on legal compliance in employment
 - B. treats recruitment, training and pay as integrated activities linked to strategy
 - C. avoids the use of non-specialist (line) managers
 - D. is only used in manufacturing businesses
- 3. Under HRM, many routine people-management tasks are increasingly carried out by: [1]**
 - A. the marketing department
 - B. external consultants only
 - C. line managers and colleagues close to the employee
 - D. customers through feedback forms
- 4. Which is the best example of HRM responding to a changing external environment? [1]**
 - A. Repainting the staff cafeteria
 - B. Updating the company logo
 - C. Redesigning working practices after a pandemic so employees can work safely and effectively
 - D. Switching electricity suppliers to reduce bills
- 5. Flexi-time usually involves: [1]**
 - A. employees choosing any total weekly hours with no limits
 - B. core hours when all employees must be present, with flexibility around start/finish times
 - C. banning part-time work
 - D. paying all employees the same salary
- 6. Redeployment occurs when a business: [1]**
 - A. dismisses an employee because a job no longer exists
 - B. offers an employee suitable alternative employment within the same organisation
 - C. hires workers from overseas
 - D. hires freelancers through an online platform
- 7. Redundancy is most accurately described as: [1]**
 - A. an employee resigning voluntarily
 - B. an employee being dismissed because a job no longer exists
 - C. an employee being promoted to a higher role
 - D. an employee working from home
- 8. According to Kotter and Schlesinger, 'self-interest' as a reason for resisting change means employees may: [1]**
 - A. prefer working in teams rather than alone
 - B. believe the change will benefit customers too much
 - C. fear they will be worse off (e.g., lose status, pay, or job security)
 - D. not understand what the change involves due to poor communication
- 9. Which strategy focuses on explaining why change is needed and how it will work? [1]**
 - A. Negotiation and bargaining
 - B. Education and communication
 - C. Manipulation and co-option
 - D. Explicit coercion

10. Force field analysis is used to: [1]
- A. calculate wages using a piece-rate system
 - B. identify driving and restraining forces affecting a proposed change
 - C. forecast exchange rates for international recruitment
 - D. select the cheapest training provider

Section B: Short answer

Answer all questions in this section. [12 marks]

1. Define the term human resource management (HRM). [2]

2. Distinguish between personnel management and human resource management (HRM). [4]

3. Explain two roles of HRM in helping an organisation achieve its strategic objectives. [6]

Section C: Data response / case study

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow. [18 marks]

Case study: The First State Bank (HRM automation)

In 2020, the First State Bank announced a new HRM package to improve the performance of its 44,000 employees and to ensure suitable candidates are available for future promotions. The bank will use technology to automate several HR tasks such as paying employees, booking holidays and processing some expenses. Senior managers estimate this will save about 5,000 employee-days of work each month, reducing costs. The system also gives managers instant access to employees' qualifications, experience, performance appraisals and roles held, helping managers plan future workforce needs and manage talent.

1. Identify two HR activities in the case that will be automated. [2]

2. Explain two reasons why introducing HRM might be important for the First State Bank. [4]

3. Analyse one benefit and one limitation of automating HR tasks for employee motivation and loyalty at the bank. [6]

Answer key and marking guidance (teacher copy)

Use this section for marking. Student responses may vary; award marks for accurate business knowledge, application to the scenario, and logical reasoning.

Question type	How to award marks
[2] Define	1 mark for an accurate definition; +1 mark for clear wording and/or a relevant example.
[4] Explain two	Typically 2 marks per point: 1 for identification, 1 for explanation linked to the question/context.
[6] Analyse	Reward cause-effect chains, depth, and application. Often 3 marks per developed point (identification + development + application).
[10] Evaluate/Discuss	Use the level descriptors provided. Look for balance, application, evaluation of trade-offs, and a justified conclusion.

Section A answers: Multiple choice

Q	Answer	Rationale (brief)
1	C	HRM is a coordinated approach to acquiring, developing, motivating and rewarding employees to help meet strategic objectives.
2	B	Personnel management often treats tasks separately; HRM integrates people management with organisational strategy.
3	C	HRM often devolves responsibility to line managers who work closely with employees.
4	C	External shocks (e.g., pandemics) can require changes to work arrangements, training and policies.
5	B	Flexi-time combines agreed core hours with flexibility in the remaining working time.
6	B	Redeployment means moving an employee to another suitable role within the business.
7	B	Redundancy occurs when the role/job ceases to exist, not because of poor performance.
8	C	Self-interest resistance is driven by perceived personal losses from the change.
9	B	Education/communication aims to build understanding and reduce misunderstanding-based resistance.
10	B	Lewin's force field analysis maps forces for and against change to plan interventions.

Section B markscheme: Short answer

1. Define the term human resource management (HRM). [2]

Indicative answer: HRM is the coordinated process of acquiring (recruiting), developing (training), motivating and rewarding a business's workforce to help achieve organisational/strategic objectives.

Marking guidance: 1 mark for a clear definition of managing people; 1 mark for linking to organisational objectives/strategy.

2. Distinguish between personnel management and human resource management (HRM). [4]

Indicative answer: Personnel management is mainly administrative and treats activities such as recruitment, training and pay as separate tasks. HRM is strategic and integrated - recruitment, training, motivation and rewards are coordinated to support corporate objectives, often with more responsibility given to line managers close to employees.

Marking guidance: Up to 2 marks per clear distinction (max 4).

3. Explain two roles of HRM in helping an organisation achieve its strategic objectives. [6]

Indicative answer: Examples of HRM roles include: (i) developing employees' skills to meet future needs through recruitment, training and flexible job roles; (ii) creating and keeping a loyal workforce through selection, career development and motivating work; (iii) responding to external change by planning new working practices and training (e.g., remote working).

Marking guidance: Up to 3 marks per role: 1 identification + up to 2 explanation/application (max 6).

Section C markscheme: Case study

Case study: The First State Bank (HRM automation)

1. Identify two HR activities in the case that will be automated. [2]

Indicative answer: Payroll/pay employees; booking holidays/leave; processing expenses (any two).

Marking guidance: 1 mark each (max 2).

2. Explain two reasons why introducing HRM might be important for the First State Bank. [4]

Indicative answer: (1) Cost reduction: automation saves around 5,000 employee-days per month, reducing HR/admin labour costs. (2) Improved workforce/talent management: managers can access qualifications and appraisals instantly, supporting promotions and future planning (other valid reasons: faster HR services, better efficiency).

Marking guidance: 2 marks per explained reason (max 4), linked to the case.

3. Analyse one benefit and one limitation of automating HR tasks for employee motivation and loyalty at the bank. [6]

Indicative answer: Benefit - automation can speed up and standardise HR services (pay, leave), reducing frustration and freeing managers to focus on coaching and development, which may raise motivation/loyalty. Limitation - employees may fear job losses or feel HR support becomes impersonal; concerns about data privacy/monitoring may reduce trust and motivation.

Marking guidance: Up to 3 marks for each side (max 6). Look for analysis linking automation to motivation/loyalty and to the bank context.

4. Analyse how instant access to employee data could improve the bank's human resource planning. [6]

Indicative answer: Instant access to qualifications, experience and appraisals helps the bank run skills audits and identify internal candidates for promotion (labour supply). It supports forecasting (who can fill future roles), targeted training to close skill gaps, and redeployment decisions. This improves the match between future labour demand and supply and speeds recruitment decisions, aligning the workforce plan with corporate objectives.

Marking guidance: Award up to 6 for clear, applied analysis (skills audit, training, redeployment, succession planning).

Section D markscheme: Extended response

Question: Evaluate the extent to which the bank's HRM package is likely to help it achieve two objectives: (i) reducing costs and (ii) developing talent for future promotions. In your answer, consider at least one possible source of resistance to change and how it could be managed. [10]

10-mark extended response (evaluation) - marking guidance

Award marks using a best-fit approach.

0: No relevant content.

1-2: Very limited knowledge; largely descriptive; little/no reference to the case; no judgement.

3-4: Some relevant knowledge; limited application to the bank; limited analysis; judgement is asserted rather than justified.

5-6: Clear knowledge and some application; some analysis of advantages/limitations; a conclusion is present but may be unbalanced or weakly supported.

7-8: Very good knowledge and strong application; balanced analysis including resistance to change; conclusion is well supported and context-based.

9-10: Excellent, integrated response; strong, precise application; perceptive evaluation (including trade-offs/ethics) and a fully justified conclusion.

Indicative content: Automation can reduce costs by saving employee time and reducing administrative work. Better data improves succession planning and targeted development for promotions. However, resistance may arise from self-interest (fear of job loss/status), preference for existing routines, or privacy concerns. HRM can manage this through communication, training/support and participation. A balanced evaluation should weigh short-term disruption and ethical/data concerns against long-term efficiency and talent development, ending with a justified judgement.

Marking guidance: Use the 10-mark level descriptors provided.